ORAL PROFICIENCY IN XHOSA

AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Perspectives in language teaching

Effective communication between different racial and language groups depends on people's proficiency in the language or languages used as a means of communication.

Effective communication is especially necessary when one looks at the multilingual nature of South Africa. According to the 1980 census, although English and Afrikaans are the official languages, 24 languages are spoken in the country (**The Star** 27.7.1985:12). Of the African languages, Zulu is the most widely spoken, followed by Xhosa and the Sotho languages.

The heterogeneous nature of the country means that children learn more than one language at school. The national education policy and provincial educational ordinances stipulate that pupils attending schools which fall under provincial departments of education should be taught either in English or Afrikaans. In most instances, the language of instruction is taught as a mother tongue or first language (L_1). The other official language (Afrikaans or English) is compulsory and is taught as a second language (L_2).

There are situations in South Africa when an additional language, officially referred to as a third language (L_3)*, is needed for communication purposes within a specific language group. At present German, Dutch, French and other modern European languages, African languages, as well as classical languages such as Latin and Greek, are taught.

In each province, the African language predominantly spoken by blacks in that region has been included as an additional language in the school curriculum. It is an elective subject up to Senior Certificate level.

Great progress has been made in promoting the teaching of African languages, to such an extent that syllabuses for a number of these languages have been devised, for example, in Pedi, Tswana, Zulu and Xhosa (Human Sciences Working Committee Report on Languages and Language Teaching 1981). Xhosa was first introduced as a Senior Certificate subject in white secondary schools in the Cape Province in 1966 (Endley 1983:1).

The term, third language (L_3), is used by education departments to facilitate the choice of school subjects. It does not denote the order in which languages are learnt. White pupils learning an African language is taken as learning an additional language, or a third language. In this study, the teaching/learning of Xhosa will mean that it is done technically as a second language but as a third language within the definition of the provincial departments of education. The terms may also be used interchangeably for the learning of Xhosa.

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* In language teaching, a distinction is made between first language (L_1), second language (L_2) and foreign language (FL).

The first language is called the mother tongue, that is the language a child learns from his parents. Some call it a native language.

The term second language refers to a language which has social functions within the community where it is learnt (e.g. as a lingua franca or as the language of another social group), whereas a foreign language (FL) is learnt primarily for contact outside one's own community. It has no established functions inside the learner's community but will be used mainly for communicating with outsiders. Foreign language learning would therefore include the learning of French in South Africa, the learning of English in Germany or Xhosa in Holland (see Littlewood 1984:54).

The approach to language teaching has been revitalised by:

- different theories concerning the nature of language
- new theories concerning the control process of language acquisition
- innovative proposals for syllabus development and the design of instructional systems as well as
- the use of a variety of novel practices, techniques and procedures in the language classroom (Richards 1978:21).

The Xhosa language did not escape this revitalisation process. A break was made from the structurally orientated syllabus (which had been in existence since 1975), resulting in the adoption of a communicative syllabus in 1982 at schools under the Cape Department of Education.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study investigates the teaching, learning and evaluation of pupils doing Xhosa at Senior Certificate level, Higher Grade and Standard Grade under the Cape Department of Education. This has been done by scrutinising the Xhosa communicative syllabus as well as the guidelines for oral evaluation suggested by the Department.

Furthermore it attempts to suggest an alternative approach in testing oral proficiency in Xhosa, related to the objectives of the syllabus for Senior Certificate which are:

- to use the communication means in everyday situations
- to develop the listening and speaking skills of the pupils in respect of various everyday themes (and their vocabulary) that occur in specific situations (1982:63).

An alternative Xhosa test which sets out to measure effectively the attainment of the above mentioned objectives of the Departmental syllabus has been constructed. The results gained from the test are presented against the backdrop of various variables which may be regarded as having an effect on the scores obtained by the testees. These variables are: sex, home language, whether Xhosa is done on the Higher or Standard Grade, and the area where the school is located.

1.3 Scope and organisation of dissertation

Apart from the introduction which is given as Chapter 1, this dissertation has been divided as follows:

Chapter 2	provides a survey of current trends in second language teaching.
Chapter 3	explores the communicative language approach.
Chapter 4	analyses the underlying concepts and current issues in communicative language testing.
Chapter 5	deals with the design of an achievement/communicative test and its application.
Chapter 6	presents an analysis of the results as well as conclusions arrived at.
Chapter 7	contains conclusions and recommendations.

1.4 Intercultural communication

A report on a study undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council on intergroup relations (hereafter referred to as the Marais Report 1985) confirms the view that a knowledge of languages fosters good human relations in South Africa.

This report also confirms the view that language is potentially one of the main factors that can influence the nature, form and quality of intergroup relations. While conceding that language differences can lead to friction, it points out that they can also lead to cultural enrichment.

The Marais Report states that only a small percentage of whites, coloured people and Indians have any knowledge of even one African language, while in the 1980 census, two-thirds of blacks indicated that they had no grasp of either English or Afrikaans and two-thirds of Indians said that they had no knowledge of Afrikaans.

1.5 Knowing a language

Paragraph 1.4 suggests that the majority of whites, coloureds and Indians do not know African languages. This statement raises a question: What does it mean when someone is said to know a language? What determines that someone has acquired a language?

Spolsky (1978:115) points out that the layman's idea of learning a language is learning words, but his criterion for knowing a language is usually expressed quite differently. In judging his own or anyone else's control of language, he is much more likely to make a functional statement, for example: "I know enough French to read a newspaper", "He can't speak enough English to ask the time of the day".

How does one determine that someone knows enough language to carry out a specified function? There are two approaches which one may adopt. One may give a learner a language-using task to perform or ask him to attempt to characterise in linguistic terms the knowledge of the language required to function in a certain way. In other words, to ask for the linguistic knowledge which correlates with the functional ability.

It must be noted that this approach may be unsuccessful because it fails to take into account two important aspects about language, **redundancy** and **creativity**.

1.5.1 Redundancy

Redundancy is a concept developed as part of the statistical theory of communication. According to this theory, a message carries information to the extent that it effects a reduction in uncertainty by eliminating certain probabilities. The greater the reduction, the greater the information (Spolsky 1978:116).

Consider the following example. Someone is asked to write his name. When he is seen writing the letter "Z" the uncertainty has been reduced considerably, for he has excluded all names that begin with any other letter. When he adds "O", uncertainty is further reduced as names like "Zama" and "Ziyanda" are ruled out. Adding the letter "L" makes it very easy to guess the rest. The final "A" eliminates all uncertainty.

The above example shows that guessing becomes progressively easier although the remaining elements contain less information. This depends on the knowledge of the probabilities of occurrence of the various elements in the order they appear. In natural languages, more units are used than are theoretically necessary, that is to say, natural languages are redundant (Spolsky 1978).

Redundancy may seem wasteful of effort, but it has great value, for it reduces the possibility of error and permits communication where there is some interference in the communicating channel (compare Van der Vyver et al 1983). When one considers all the interferences that occur when natural language is used for communication, it is clear that only a redundant system will work.

The implication in the above discussion is that knowing a language well involves the ability to understand a distorted message, to read a message with reduced redundancy. Knowing a language involves knowing the items that make up the language, but it also involves being able to supply these items when they are missing, or being able to do without them (Spolsky 1978). In church, for instance, when one sings without a hymn book at hand, one can guess the words of the hymn if one knows the target language.

1.5.2 Creativity

Spolsky (1978) notes that the creative aspect of language was lost sight of for some time in the behaviourist modes that dominated linguistics in the first half of the twentieth century. It was the understatement of the creative aspect that characterized linguistics until Chomsky (1964:56) reaffirmed that the essence of language is its characteristic form (not to "be identified with" inner form), a constant and unvarying factor underlying each new linguistic act.

The central fact in support of the creative aspect is that human beings produce (and of course understand) many sentences that they have never heard before. Creativity is the basic distinction between what may be called language-like behaviour and knowing a language. Spolsky (1978) ascribes language-like behaviour to the parrot trained to speak and equally well to the student who is able to recite a number of sentences in a second language but not able to modify them and use them in a free-conversational situation. Knowledge of rules is also regarded as the principal factor in the understanding of messages with reduced redundancy. Spolsky (1978) stresses that one is interested not just in the fact that someone knows a language but that he knows how to use it, i.e. communicative competence and communicative performance.

Schulz (1976) suggests three conditions which appear to be necessary for communicative competence to develop. First, the student needs authentic meaningful life situations in which to practise the language; second, he requires the motivation to express himself; and third, he needs the freedom to use the language to create and experiment linguistically in a supportive classroom environment without the fear of ridicule, being rewarded for the

content of what he says, rather than having the teacher recoil at his errors. Schulz's conditions may be modified by broadening the focus of language learning to include both informal and formal learning.

1.6 Informal and formal learning

Educators are showing increased interest in the nature of informal and formal learning and in the relationship between the two (d'Anglejan 1978), since schools have not been completely successful in providing an adequate learning environment.

Language learning may be viewed as a process whereby the learner, through interacting with his environment, creates for himself an internal representation about the nature of that environment. In the case of language learning it is, of course, his linguistic environment with which he is interacting. This means that learning results from interaction with speakers of the language, native or otherwise. One may, of course, learn a language inside and outside the classroom.

The learner, as a result of his interaction with speakers of the target language, is engaged in the task of creating for himself an ever more adequate internal grammar of the language (Corder 1978).

To test the adequacy of his internal grammar, the learner makes utterances which derive from it, to see whether they work, i.e., achieve their communicative intent. If they do, he has no reason to doubt the validity of his hypothesis, if they do not (if his interlocutor reacts in such a manner to indicate that he does not understand or accept the utterance) then the learner will attempt to improve his hypothesis. This is what is meant by interaction with the environment.

It would appear that school learning is removed from the context of socially relevant action and is embedded in a context of language and symbolic activity. As a result, sources of information upon which the learner may draw in the classroom are greatly reduced, observation is of limited value, and learning is highly dependent on the medium of language. The learning process is frequently initiated through the formal verbalisation of rules or principles underlying the tasks to be mastered. This is in striking contrast with informal learning in which neither the teacher nor the learner is expected to articulate the rules which underlie social values, cultural practices, or specific tasks (d'Anglejan 1978:220). Learning grows through experience with reality, and it may well be that the capacity to learn informally is enhanced by repeated opportunities to do so. It is equally

likely that the ability to gain from formal teaching grows through school experiences. Child language acquisition is an example of informal learning. Studies focusing on the interactions between mothers and their very young children reveal a powerful interpersonal bond which appears to lay the foundation for the development of language. In adult-child interactions, the language learning process is an unconscious one, embedded in the context of everyday activities, and not dependent on explicit teaching provided by an adult (d'Anglejan 1978:221).

Contemporary theoretical views tend to support the view that first and second language learning are essentially analogous processes (see Macnamara 1973 and Ervin Tripp 1974). It is argued that the second language learner, like the young child, constructs for himself the rule system of the target language and progresses in a systematic manner toward increased mastery of the second language (Corder 1978, Hatch 1978).

Krashen (1982 (a)) has proposed a monitor model for second language performance. According to him, adult second language learners concurrently develop two possibly independent linguistic systems for second language performance, one acquired incidentally and unconsciously through a creative construction process, and the other consciously learned as the result of formal instruction. Linguistic production in the second language is made possible by the acquired system, with the learned system acting as a monitor.

Krashen's model provides an explanation for the variability which is evident in second language performance resulting from both formal and informal learning.

There is sound theoretical, empirical and anecdotal support for the position that verbal fluency in a second language is most effectively acquired when the learning context corresponds to that described for informal learning and where it is possible for the language to be acquired rather than learned (d'Anglejan 1978:223).

Direct participation in communication with native speakers, as well as social or professional contact with the target-language group, provides the authentic linguistic input, or feedback on performance, which is essential for second language acquisition.

1.7 Some limitations of the study

As with the majority of similar studies in the field of Applied Linguistics, the study hopes to break new ground leading to improvements, modifications and further research.

Successful foreign-language teaching is more of a **process** than a **product**. (Higgs 1981:310). It depends on innumerable factors, many of which, though only dimly understood, are fiercely debated. For this reason Higgs (1981:310) is quite justifiably doubtful about empirical validation.

> When we are not certain of what language is, nor of how it is acquired or learned, it becomes at least immodest to claim categorically that we know the best way either to facilitate acquisition or to teach it to students.

In addition, as was experienced in this study, classroom situations make true experimental control very difficult (Higgs 1981:309).

The standard pattern is to use matched groups. Matched groups are used in the experimental method. These groups are randomly selected and paired as far as possible within the limits of the crude evaluative instruments that are available in the social and humanistic sciences (Leedy 1974). At the outset it is assumed that the forces and dynamics within both groups are equistatic. Each group will resemble the other in as many characteristics as possible and with respect to those qualities that are critical to the experiment. Mathematically, an equivalent status of these groups at the beginning of the experiment may be represented as Experimental group = Control group (Leedy 1974:147).

At the beginning of the experiment, it is assumed that both groups have identical characteristics, identical values, and identical status. However, perfect identity is more theoretical than real. The experimental method deals with the phenomenon of cause and effect. The cause and effect dynamics within a closed system of controlled conditions are assessed. This element of control is characteristic of the experimental method (Leedy 1974).

The present research is an ex post facto study. Mouly as quoted by Leedy (1974:155) writes the following about this discipline of research:

> A relatively questionable quasi-experimental design is the ex post facto experiment, in which a particular characteristic of a given group is investigated with a view to identifying its antecedents. This is experimentation in reverse: instead of taking groups that are equivalent and exposing them to different treatment with a view to

> promoting differences to be measured, the ex post facto experiment begins with a given effect and seeks the experimental factor that brought it about. The obvious weakness of such an "experiment" is that we have no control over the situations that have already occurred and we can never be sure of how many other circumstances might have been involved.

The present study has the same limitations since it has no equistatic groups in its sample. Furthermore, there is no control element in the variables.

Despite these limitations, Leedy (1974) concedes that this method also pursues truth and seeks the solution of a problem through the analysis of data. He points out that science has no difficulty with such a methodology. He explains that the research which is going on in space laboratories with respect to the moon rocks is research which is purely ex post facto. Yet no one will deny that this research is orientated to specific problems, supported by specific data, and given direction by underlying hypotheses (1974:156).

1.8 Characteristics of the study

The study is divided into two sections. The first is a theoretical study of communicative language teaching and testing, and the second is an empirical study of the design and application of a communicative test.

The theoretical study deals with a literature survey of major approaches in second language teaching: traditional, structural and transformational generative. It also deals with disciplines that provide the necessary theoretical foundations and the data underlying teaching. The survey also describes language teaching methods and second language testing concepts, as well as current issues related to them.

The empirical section of this research deals with the construction of a communicative test, the application of the test to 159 pupils, a statistical analysis of the results and the conclusions derived from these results. The results gained from the test are presented against the background of various variables which are regarded as having an influence on the performance of the testees.

CHAPTER 2

MAJOR APPROACHES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1 Introduction

Every human society, no matter how primitive in certain respects, has a fully developed language. According to Lenneberg (1968: 32-34) many of these languages have certain biological foundations in common.

First, there are anatomic and physiological correlates. Man has highly developed and specialised muscles and organs used for the production of speech which no other primate has. The second is onset, the regular developmental schedule of language acquisition common to all normal children that is interlocked with other maturing processes. Third, language learning takes place despite severe handicaps such as deafness, congenital mental deficiency or brain damage. The fourth one is the achievement of language facility without formal instruction. Teaching a child his first language does not expedite his learning it; the child must be ready for speaking just as he must be ready for walking before he can "learn" to do so.

Lenneberg (1968) points out that all languages have words for relations, objects, feelings and qualities, and that the semantic differences between these are minimal from a biological point of view. In other words man, and only man, has a built-in biologically based faculty for the acquisition of language. Language is therefore both species-specific and species-uniform.

2.2 Language and communication

Language is a means of communication. It is used mainly to express man's ideas about the world surrounding him. Man talks about the things he sees happening; about who or what is affected by them. Man can refer to the objects of the physical world and to their qualities. He can report the activities that are carried out and the manner in which they are performed. He can also express the way in which events are related to one another in time and to the moment of speech. Language learning is essentially a means of communication. For a language to be learnt, the learner must communicate with a speaker of the language. In other words, in order to facilitate human interaction, there has to be communication.

2.3 Language acquisition and language learning

Chomskyan linguistics distinguishes between **acquisition** and **learning**. Rivers (1980:51) contends that implicit, subconscious learning develops from natural communication. It follows a fairly stable order of acquisition of structures. These acquired linguistic structures initiate performance, which may be self-corrected on the basis of a feel for grammaticality.

Language learning is explicit, conscious learning which is fostered by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules. It does not contribute directly to the acquisition of language or to performance, since utterances are initiated by the acquired system.

On the same topic, Wilkins (1978b:26) points out that language acquisition is a process in which a language is acquired as a result of natural and largely random exposure to language whereas the term language learning applies to a condition where the exposure is structured by language teaching.

Wilkins (1978b:31, 37) points out that the most obvious contrast between the language learning situation and the language acquisition situation is the amount of exposure to language. Apart from intensive language learning courses, language classes provide from two to six hours' exposure to the target language weekly for up to forty weeks of the year. One year in the classroom provides the equivalent of from one to three weeks' contact in the language acquisition situation.

Another difference is that in the language acquisition situation, the child learning the mother tongue either addresses his language to other children or adults or else engages in imaginary language activity. This activity may take the form of a monologue, often with an imaginary interlocutor, or a dialogue in which the child performs both roles in a conversation. For the child at this stage of linguistic development these are acts of communication even in the absence of an addressee. Fantasy and the real world are not readily distinguishable. By the time children are of an age to be taught a foreign language, a division between the two has taken place.

During the past ten years much attention in research on second language acquisition has been devoted to devising theories and models which describe and explain crucial factors and processes in adult L_2 learning. Among these are Krashen's Monitor Theory and the Input Hypothesis. Krashen's (1982b) Monitor Model and accompanying theories have had more impact than any others to date on second language acquisition research (and on second

language teaching). Nagle and Saunders (1986:10) provide a useful explanation of several of the fundamental premises. In Krashen's terms, acquisition and learning are technical terms representing separate phenomena. Acquisition focuses on communication and is not a conscious activity; learning focuses on form, is consciously done, and results in metalinguistic knowledge. In speech production, acquired and learnt forms are generated separately, with monitoring and conscious attention to performance often modifying output; the amount of monitoring is a variable. In other words when one learns to speak a second language one tends to speak grammatically correctly. Correctness is an overriding issue when communicating with someone. The monitor, according to its proponents, is an output component and has no effect on acquisition. The conditions for optimal monitor use are a focus on form, sufficient time and knowledge of a pertinent rule. The monitor can be overused or misused, resulting in hesitant and/or deficient target language production. In decoding L_2 input, affective variables can impede acquisition and learning. The Input Hypothesis lists the conditions which are both necessary and sufficient for second language acquisition to occur: input must be of sufficient quantity, it must be comprehensible and there must be negative input provided for the learner.

In both publications Krashen (1982 a & b) claims that acquisition takes place during episodes of authentic communication in the language. He considers it to be the source of the students' ability to use the language in unstructured interaction. Formal learning of the language may contribute to self-monitoring, or self-editing, of output that sometimes occurs when speakers have time to reflect and focus on the form of their utterances. Krashen considers that **formal learning** of language features or practice in the use of these features is of very little importance in the development of communicative ability for most language learners, whereas **active interaction** in one language is, and should be, the major activity in a classroom (compare Chapter 1).

In an account supported by Stevick (1980), Littlewood (1984:77) states that acquisition and learning represent different ways of internalising language. However, he argues that the acquired and learned systems do not remain separate, but can `bleed' into one another. If the main frame is creative construction, this would mean that as a result of practice, structures which have been consciously learnt could pass into the acquired store. They would then become available for use in spontaneous language activity, together with the structures acquired through creative construction.

In conclusion one can say that second language research points to the fact that communication does not occur only when people make conscious efforts to learn. Communication also takes place as a result of spontaneous, subconscious mechanisms

which are activated when learners are involved in communication in the second language. In the majority of traditional language teaching activities, the conscious element is strong: dialogues are specified to be learnt, structures to be practised and words to be memorised. However, the subconscious element demands a new range of activities, where learners focus not on the language itself, but on the communication of meanings.

In this study, a systematic distinction between learning and acquisition has not been made. As Littlewood (1984:3) points out: `Our knowledge about what is conscious and what is subconscious in second language learning is too vague for us to use the distinction reliably'. Learning here is used as an umbrella term, except when the distinction is crucial to the immediate discussion.

2.4 Language teaching

Language teaching is defined as activities which are intended to bring about language learning (Stern 1983: 21). Teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. To satisfy the practical demands of education, theories of learning must stand on their head so as to yield theories of teaching. Teaching is essentially involved in guiding and facilitating learning. One's understanding of how a learner learns will determine one's philosophy of education, teaching style, approach, methods and classroom techniques. One's theory of teaching, in conjunction with one's understanding of the learner and of the subject matter to be learned, will point the way to successful procedures on a given day for given learners under the various constraints of the particular learning content.

A theory of language teaching always relates to concepts in linguistic study. In support of this argument, Robinett (1978:160) points out that since the beginning of the century, three major approaches to linguistic study have been discernible: the traditional, the structural and the transformational-generative. These have been more or less paralleled in language teaching methodology by the grammar translation method, the audiolingual method and the cognitive-code learning method.

Traditionally in the description of languages a much higher status was accorded to the written than to the spoken language (Wilkins 1976). In cultures where only a minority was educated, literacy was the significant indication of the educated mind. The educated man was respected for the knowledge to which his literacy gave him access and for the social prominence that his learning gave him. Since, by definition, a literate man is one who can understand written language, it follows that the high status accorded to the individual should also be accorded to the form of the language that only he appreciates.

It is not surprising, then, that language of all sorts is evaluated against the norm of written language.

This attitude had consequences for the teaching of foreign languages (Wilkins 1978(a)). The teacher may well meet the attitude in his pupils that they were not really learning anything until they were being taught to read and write.

Linguistics, however, brought to the study of language a revaluation of the relationship between the spoken and the written forms of the language (1978(a):5). In recent years it has been argued on both linguistic and psychological grounds that spoken language should be the principal objective in language teaching (Wilkins 1978(b):61). For various reasons the linguist has concluded that speech is the primary form of language and that writing is secondary to it and derived from it. As a result the study of language has focused very much on speech.

Wilkins (1978(b)) raises two arguments that can be used to support the view that greater prominence should be given to speech. He points out that there is the possibility that pupils may be more motivated to learn spoken than written language. The fact that language is a means of day-to-day communication needs to be kept continually before them, and this can perhaps be more easily appreciated if the language is in its spoken form. Being able to speak the foreign language makes it more like their mother-tongue which they more often speak than write.

The other argument links methodology and objectives. It is that a knowledge of spoken language is more easily transferred to the written medium than the converse (Wilkins 1978(b):62). The result has been that a far larger proportion of the teaching time in recent years has been devoted to speech in the belief that the learner himself, with some assistance, could make the transfer to writing. In this case, the emphasis in the methods had the effect of modifying the potential achievement and effectively, therefore, the objectives.

At present, with the solvent of the communicative language teaching approach, more attention is paid to oral skills. This confirms the view raised by Wilkins. This emphasis appears to have become more evident as a result of the introduction of departments of applied linguistics at universities.

According to Stern (1983:37) the disciplines that provide the necessary theoretical foundations and the data underlying teaching are:

- **psychology** which provides us with a theory of learning
- **psycholinguistics**, a theory of language learning
- **general linguistics**, a theory of language and language descriptions and
- **sociolinguistics**, a theory of language in society.

In an earlier publication, Stern (1974) was more explicit, stating that language teaching demands an understanding of the nature of language and language use; hence linguistics, psychology and sociolinguistics. It also demands an understanding of teaching and learning, in particular the teaching and learning of language, hence psychology/psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.
Linguistics can provide concepts and theories for an understanding of the nature of language and it has the techniques for gathering the necessary descriptive data on the languages to be taught.

Psychology and psycholinguistics provide a basis for understanding language acquisition and the language learner as an individual. Sociolinguistics places the language to be learnt and the learning of languages into sociocultural context.

These disciplines, contends Stern (1983), together with the problem of language education, constitute a problem-orientated discipline which Spolsky (1980:68) refers to as educational linguistics. Others have called it applied linguistics.

Kaplan (1980:10), on the other hand, contends that applied linguistics constitutes the point at which all study of language converges and becomes actualised. He concludes that second language teaching is a complex task in which the nature of language (linguistics) and how it is learnt (psycholinguistics) are obviously relevant. Each aspect is important. Psychology studies the behaviour, activities, conduct and mental processes of human beings. (Stern 1983:291).

It is therefore hardly feasible that one could teach a language without a psychological theory about the language learner and the language learning process. It is not surprising therefore, to find references to psychology in the writings of most language teaching theorists.

There are areas of psychology which have a direct bearing on language teaching, child psychology, social psychology, physiological psychology, psychopathology, psychotherapy and clinical psychology. Physiological psychology, which is the study of the physiological correlates of mental processes, has played a part in the debate on the question of an optimal age for second language learning. It explores the question whether the maturation of brain functioning and lateralisation which occur in the early years of life have a bearing on the ability to learn languages.

Certain psychological factors also have a great influence on second language learning. Maturation, for instance, is the crucial force which determines whether a learner will embark on a task at all, how much energy he will devote to it, and how long he will persevere. This psychological factor plays an important role in every facet of a learning situation.

Attitude is another psychological factor which has a bearing on learning a second language. When a learner is favourably disposed towards the speakers of the language he is learning, he will wish for more frequent contact with the second language community. In other words, favourable attitudes reinforce the extent to which a learner perceives communicative need.

Most of the teaching methods have claimed to incorporate insights from the psychological theories current at the time. For example, McDonough (1981:1) contends that the grammar translation method appealed to so-called faculty psychology because of the emphasis on training the mind. The audiolingual method incorporated some of the views of behaviouristic psychology, notably the concept of habit and the law of effect.

Besides psychology, there is also another branch of study concerned with the investigation of the mental processes underlying the learning and using of language - psycholinguistics.

Stern (1983) argues that psycholinguistics deals with processes of encoding and decoding as they relate states of messages to states of communicators. It deals with two main questions: what it means to know a language, and how a child acquires language.
Knowing a language provides a standard or model for the concept of proficiency or competence in second language teaching. Psycholinguistics provides concepts and theories of language proficiency, knowledge and use. Language teaching theorists must certainly consider these.

The objectives of second language teaching are not necessarily determined entirely by native language use but what is considered to be native language competence inevitably serves as the backdrop for second language learning (compare Van Parreren 1975:106).

Similar considerations apply to the second question. It cannot be automatically assumed that first language acquisition and second language learning are identical. Indeed, the situation of a child learning a first language differs in many ways from that of the student learning a second or third language (see Cooper 1972:14; Van Parreren 1975:106 and Herron 1982:240). Children acquiring their first language are surrounded by the speech of their family for most of their waking hours. Some second language theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn (compare Wilkins 1978 (b): 24-27). However, Krashen's (1982b) Acquisition Learning Hypothesis claims that adults also acquire, that the ability to pick up languages does not disappear at puberty. This does not mean that adults will always be able to achieve native-like levels in a second language. It does mean, however, that adults have the same natural `language acquisition device' that children use, concludes Krashen (1982(b): 10).

On the strength of Krashen's theory one can state that language acquisition takes place in both first and second language learning. However, the learning processes differ because of the situations within which the learning takes place, the level of development of the brain, motivation and attitude (compare Canale and Swain 1980:11). Native language growth provides a standard by which to conceptualise second language learning.

Other areas in which psycholinguistics has contributed to foreign language teaching are the neurophysiological (characteristics and functions of the brain) and the cognitive (mental processes that interact with linguistic knowledge).

Research in psycholinguistics may help to determine teaching methods based not only on course objectives, but also on an understanding of the students and assumptions about how a second language is learnt. At present understanding gained from psycholinguistics has resulted in a movement away from behaviourism toward cognitivism, with an increasing interest being shown in a humanistic emphasis (Magnan 1983:384 and further).

Corder (1973:276) describes linguistics as the study of what a native speaker knows about his language in order to speak it. It is the more or less explicit externalisation of the internalised rules he uses to speak and understand his own language. Modern linguistics aims to offer a comprehensive, precise and systematic account of the formal aspects of language.

In Corder's view linguistics is there to explain language and to provide descriptions of languages. Linguistics gives us the theoretical basis and the technical means to describe the languages which are taught. It also provides the means to compose languages and to compare them with others.

Language teachers have always looked to the linguist for guidance (Johnson 1982:10). It is natural for the language teacher to regard linguistics as something of a mother discipline. It is small wonder then that linguistic trends are reflected in the language teaching classroom.

Most teaching methods are based on some contemporary theoretical models. McDonough (1981) cites the grammar translation method which uses parsing into traditional grammar categories originally developed for the classical languages. The audiolingual method, on the other hand, uses a version of structural linguistics.

It is difficult to imagine that languages can ever be taught without reference to language descriptions available. Linguistics will therefore always be a field of study relevant to language teaching (Wilkins 1978:215). Many aspects have to be taken into consideration when defining the goals of learning; determining the broad methodological approach; assessing the value of particular techniques; organising the language content - all of which require a thorough understanding of what language is. For this reason the language teacher will probably find the study of linguistics very rewarding.

Wilkins (1978a:229) sums up the views on linguistics by stressing that the real contribution of linguistics to language teaching is to increase one's understanding of the nature of language. Anyone who has studied linguistics is sensitised to language and thereby to the complexity of language learning. He will better be able to exercise critical judgement of attractive innovations in language teaching, including those that may claim to be supported by linguistic research.

The study of African linguistics with a view to teaching African languages to speakers of Indo-European languages is even more relevant. Fivaz (1974:8) states that during the slightly more than half a century that African languages have been taught, the emphasis has been much more on linguistic analysis than on literature. Most African linguistic research has been and continues to be in the field of grammatical description.

Grammatical description has enabled learners to become aware of the explicit characteristics of African languages, such as the noun class system, agreement, verbal extensions, moods, tenses and auxiliary verbs. If the Indo-European language learner has a knowledge of African linguistics he may find it easier to learn the target language.
In conclusion it can be said that linguistics offers knowledge about language in general, as well as about specific languages, fundamental to language teaching. This is even more important in the learning of non-cognate languages.

Criper and Widdowson (1975:156) define sociolinguistics as the study of language in operation; its purpose is to investigate how conventions of language are used to relate to other aspects of social behaviour. Sociolinguistics concerns itself particularly with language as it is used for communication within one social group. It studies natural language in all its various social and cultural contexts.

According to Canale and Swain (1980) two common terms in foreign language teaching today - communicative competence and notional-functional - are rooted in sociolinguistics.

This last decade may be seen as an era of communicative foreign language teaching. The term communicative competence was originally used by Hymes and other sociolinguists to describe the ideal speaker's knowledge of language usage in a particular social setting.

Canale and Swain (1980) identify four components of communicative competence:

- grammatical competence (knowledge of linguistic form, what Chomsky refers to as linguistic competence)

- sociolinguistic competence (social use of language as discussed by Hymes)

- discourse competence (connection of a series of utterances to form a meaningful whole)

- strategic competence (ways of compensating for imperfect knowledge of rules).

These four notions may apply to both speech and writing. When foreign language teachers use the term communicative competence, however, they generally have a less ambitious goal in mind than competence in all four of these areas; their concern is most often for developing minimal oral communicative ability (Magnan 1983:386).

Communicative competence is a sociolinguistic concept brought into foreign language teaching as a goal. In order to achieve this goal, language teaching may be organised into notional-functional syllabuses.

Communicative competence is explored in the analysis of speech acts and in discourse analysis. Moore (1978:7) defines a speech act as what an utterance does, eg. promise, threat. In analysing speech acts, he takes two aspects into account:

- what speakers use to convey meanings, eg. facial expression, tone of voice, distance between speaker and listener, sentence type and choice of vocabulary

- the social context in which an utterance takes place and knowledge about it which is shared by speaker and listener.

Magnan (1983:386) takes a similar view and defines speech acts as what we do when we speak and what we accomplish through speaking. For example, we narrate, describe, explain, intimidate, order or show disagreement or agreement. There are also means to express notions such as time, quantity, space, obligation and volition.

A notional-functional syllabus, consequently, organises language teaching in terms of such notions and functions rather than in terms of points of grammar, i.e. in terms of the purpose of communication rather than form. The syllabus is thus pragmatic, based on meaning and bound by rules of sociolinguistic interaction.

This brief consideration of two terms now popular in foreign language teaching - communicative competence and notional- functional, illustrates how sociolinguistic research has contributed to language teaching and how it may affect language teaching in the classroom.

In the ensuing discussion, attempts are made to show how various disciplines have influenced language teaching. Needless to say, these disciplines have changed their theoretical viewpoints from time to time. Teaching methods have changed accordingly. These changes may be an indication that little is known about what language is and how it is learned, and so little is known about the best way to teach, (compare Littlewood 1984:90). What may today seem the best means of teaching a second language may not remain so in the light of new findings in the field of psychology, psycholinguistics, linguistics and sociolinguistics.

2.5 Language teaching methods

Method is defined by Allen (1965:95) as an overall plan for the orderly and consistent presentation of language material. Brumfit and Roberts (1983:79) on the other hand define method as constituting a set of techniques, based on a certain type of syllabus and using certain types of materials. A method is therefore the sum of teaching techniques utilised in a certain situation.

Brown (1980:240) points out that methods are difficult to define. They manifest themselves in varieties, at times making the term **approach** more accurately descriptive of these general methods. He views an approach as a general and theoretical view of how language ought to be taught, while a method includes a developed procedure for teaching.

Whilst on the same topic it may be argued that one of the factors which influence the orderly presentation of language to students is the difference between the first and target language. The order will be influenced by the nature of the students' language as compared to the language being taught, as is the case in teaching Xhosa to Afrikaans/English speakers.

In the first place, Xhosa sounds are different from English/Afrikaans sounds. Development of the listening skill should be of paramount importance. In developing speaking ability, tonal differences in intonation require more emphasis since Xhosa is a tone language. As Xhosa is not a cognate of English/Afrikaans, it differs morphologically, semantically and syntactically. A method which would require the learner to use his cognitive faculties is necessary. It is also necessary to apply a method which shows quick results. Since language and culture are intertwined, sociolinguistic input would be necessary.

Every language teaching method has certain theoretical foundations involving more than one discipline. As has been noted, language teaching calls upon not just linguistics or just psychology, but involves both, along with pedagogical, sociological and other inter-disciplinary considerations.

The observation in Brown (1980) that language teaching methods manifest a new paradigm every quarter of a century or so applies to methods used in the teaching of Xhosa. Each new paradigm shows a break from the old but takes with it positive aspects of previous paradigms.

A study of the literature on language teaching has revealed three basic approaches:

- **the traditional method approach**, which includes the grammar translation method, the direct method, the audio- lingual method, the cognitive-code learning method as well as eclectic compromises between them, developed up until about a decade-and-a half ago

- **the communicative method approach**

- **the humanistic (psychological method approach)**, which includes the Silent Way, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia, regarded as the major representatives of this approach.

On looking at the traditional approach, Benseler (1980:890) focuses attention on four methods which he maintains have had a major influence on present day foreign language teaching. These methods are:

- grammar translation method
- direct method
- audiolingual method and
- cognitive-code method.

2.5.1 Grammar translation method

The grammar translation method is clearly rooted in the formal teaching of Latin and Greek which prevailed in Europe during the nineteenth century. As its name suggests, this method emphasises the teaching of second language grammar. Its principal practice technique is translation from and into the target language. It places little or no emphasis on the speaking of the second language or listening to second language speech. It is a mainly book orientated method of working out and learning the grammatical system of the language (Stern 1983:454).

Rivers (1973) and Chastain (1976) agree that the primary purpose of the grammar translation method is to inculcate an understanding of the grammar of the language, and to train the students to write the new language accurately by regular practice in translating from the native language.

These aims are achieved in the classroom by detailed grammatical explanations in the native language, followed by practice on the part of the students in writing paradigms and applying the rules they have learnt when constructing sentences in the target language.

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Much class time is spent "talking about" the language.
The theoretical assumption underlying the method is that language learning is viewed as an intellectual activity. The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language. The theoretical framework of the grammar translation method is more pedagogical than linguistic or psychological (Stern 1983:455).

Language course writers tend to be eclectic in their methods. As a result it is difficult to state emphatically that a particular language course uses only one method. The result is that one coursebook may appear to represent more than one method. For example Jordan (1966) applies both the grammar translation and direct methods. It should therefore not surprise the reader when one coursebook is used as reference for several methods. Nevertheless, a high percentage of the work would involve a specific method.

Several of the available commercial Xhosa courses are based on the principles of the grammar translation method (Louw 1963). The learner is exposed to a component of Xhosa grammar. Exercises given are based on part of the grammar taught. This is to enable the student to practise. The following may serve as an example: in his course, Louw first introduces the perfect and future formatives. Thereafter, the learner has to do exercises based on the work and some form of translation. Consider the following excerpt:

Vul in die regte konkords en voltooi die perfektum tydvorms en vertaal:

1.	Amadoda	sebenz	
2.	Umfazi	hlamb	ilokhwe
3.	Umntu	fihl	inyaniso
4.	Ukudla	fik	
5.	Ndibon	indawo	

Vul in die regte konkords en die futurum en vertaal:

1.	Umfana	za kuhamba.	
2.	Umntwana	ya ku	bona indlu.
3.	Intombikazi	ya kusinda indlu.	
4.	Inkabi	za ku	tsala inqwelo.
5.	Indoda	ya kubopha ihashe.	

(p.41, p.43)

In chapter 10 of the same book, Louw discusses the nominal suffixes -kazi and -ana and then presents an exercise based on these nominal suffixes:

Gee die Xhosa vir die volgende woorde en maak afleidings van hierdie Xhosa-woorde deur die suffikse **-kazi, -azi, -ana** en **-azana** daaraan te voeg.

koei	ding	kalf
seun	ou man	byl
rivier	olifant	os
berg	dier	onderwyser
vader	skoonvader	arm mens

Vertaal in Afrikaans

1. Imbuzikazi iya kukhaba inkwenkwe
2. Inkosikazi ihlamba izitya
3. Ubona umthikazi
4. Imbuzana iyafa
5. Usilahlile isihlalwana

Vertaal in Xhosa

1. Hy melk die koeitjies
2. Die man het die besies geslag
3. Die kalwers drink melk
4. Die voëltjies vlieg
5. Hy sien die hoendertjies

(p.55)

In his Xhosa course Oosthuysen (1967) also uses the grammar translation method. In each chapter, he first deals with a grammatical element of Xhosa and then provides translation practice into either Xhosa or Afrikaans.

In lesson 14 Oosthuysen deals with what he calls the descriptive construction. He discusses the various forms of the descriptive construction which he terms:

i) die omskrywende konstruksie met 'n byvoeglike naamwoord
ii) die omskrywende konstruksie met 'n bywoord
iii) die omskrywende konstruksie met 'n werkwoord
iv) die omskrywende konstruksie as voornaamwoord.
(pp.44-47)

The student is then expected to do the following exercises:

Oefening 27

Lees hardop en vertaal in Afrikaans:

1. Umntu osebenzayo utya inyama emnandi
2. Iintloko ezingwevu zimbalwa esikolweni
3. Ndifuna ukutya okumnandi, andikufuni ukutya okukrakra, okanye okumuncu
4. Ndithanda umlungu ofundisa kakuhle
5. Ilityе elinjalo lingaka
6. Abantu abamhlophe bambalwa entsimini, kodwa abaNtsundu abasebenzayo basebenza kakuhle.
(p.47)

Oefening 28

Vertaal in Xhosa:

1. Waar is die beeste wat weghardloop? Hulle is ver in die berg.
2. Dit is in die winter maar die bokke wat groei, wei (eet) nie in die lande nie.
3. Haar ma se: "Koop 'n rooi kombers." Maar Nompunzi koop nie so een nie; nee, sy koop 'n witte.
4. Die kinders wat ver is, werk sleg, maar die wat naby is werk goed, want die ouers sien hulle.
(p.48)

The grammar translation method has been used by other writers as well, for example Jordan (1966), Riordan (1969), and Kirsch and Skorge (1979).

The grammar translation method has been widely criticized (Rivers (1973), Chastain (1976), Trengove (1976), Brown (1980) and Stern (1983)). The common criticism about

grammar translation is that little stress is laid on accurate pronunciation and intonation, communication skills are neglected. Great store is placed on knowing rules and exceptions, but there is little training in using the language actively to express meaning, even in writing.

2.5.2 Direct method

The direct method was a reaction to the grammar translation method. Language teachers realised that second language learning entailed far more than memorising grammatical rules. They realised that knowing a second language meant understanding and speaking. The direct method marked a shift from literary language to spoken everyday language.

The techniques used in using the method in the classroom involve the presentation of a text by the teacher. The text is usually a short, specially constructed foreign language narrative in the textbook. Difficult expressions are explained in the target language. Much time is spent on questions and answers on the text.

Benseler (1980) argues that the use of the direct method presupposes native or near-native proficiency in the target language by the teacher. The method makes great demands on the teachers. They have to be resourceful in order to make meaning clear in a variety of ways without resorting at any time to using the native language.

Another exponent of the direct method in the teaching of Xhosa is Jordan (1966), who makes extensive use of this method. The student is presented with a text and difficult expressions are explained in the target language.

In the preface to his course, Jordan draws attention to the fact that the method upon which the manual is based is as close to the direct method as he could make it for adults. He states that grammar is used mainly as a means, and not as an end in itself.

The following exercises illustrate his approach. The learners are first presented with a dialogue and then given the excercise based on the dialogue:

INDODA INCOKOLA NENKWENKWE

Indoda:	Bhota, mfan' am!
Inkwe.:	Bhota, bawo!
Indoda:	Ungubani igama lakho?

Inkwe.: Igama lam ndinguSipho, bawo.

Indoda: Ikhaya lakho liphi?

Inkwe.: Ikhaya lam liseMbokothwana

Indoda: KwaBani?

Inkwe.: KwaMashiya.

Indoda: Ndibazi kakhulu abantu bakwaMashiya. UWiso ngumhlobo wam.

Inkwe.: Ngutata lowo!

Indoda: Uthi ni? Ungunyana kaWiso?

Inkwe.: Ewe, ndingunyana kaWiso.

Indoda: Ndivuya kakhulu ukukwazi, mntan' am. Abazali bakho basaphila?

Inkwe.: Basaphila, enkosi, tata.

Indoda: Baphi?

Inkwe.: Utata ulapha eMthatha. Size kunye. Umama yena usekhaya.

Indoda: Oodadewenu baphi?

Inkwe.: Oodadewethu basekhaya

Indoda: Kanene, ngoobani amagama abo?

Inkwe.: NguLiziwe noNothemba.

Indoda: Kanene, wena uyinkulu kaWiso?

Inkwe.: Ewe, ndiyinkulu.

Indoda: Abaninawa bakho baphi?

Inkwe.: Basekhaya.

Indoda: Ngoobani amagama abo?

Inkwe.: NguThami noLindi.

Indoda: Oo! Ndiyabona ke, mntan' am. Ke ngoku uya phi?

Inkwe.: Ndiphuthuma amahashe enkampini.

Indoda: Nize ngekari?

Inkwe.: Hayi, sikhwele.

Indoda: Nikhwele uGawula noGodukani?

Inkwe.: Awu! Uyawazi amahashe katata?

Indoda: Ndiwazi onke amahashe kayihlo

Inkwe.: Hayi, sikhwele mahashe wambi namhla-nje. UGawula uyaqhwalela. Utata ukhwele hashe limbi.

Indoda: O! Nikhwele waphi ke!

Inkwe.: UHombani noGeja.

Indoda: Uyihlo ukhwele liphi?

Inkwe.: Ukhwele uHombani.

Indoda: Niza kugoduka ngoku?

Inkwe.: Ewe, siza kugoduka

Indoda: Uyihlo uphi ngoku?

Inkwe.: Uphaya emarikeni.

Indoda: Oo! Kulungile ke, mntan' am. Undibulisele kubazali bakho.

Inkwe.: Enkosi! Kanene ungubani wena, tata?

Indoda: Mna ndinguDosini. Ikhaya lam liphaya eNcambedlana.

Inkwe.: Ndiyabulela, tata. Ndiya kukubulisela kubazali bam. Sala kuhle!

Indoda: Hamba kuhle, mntan' am!

(pp.107-108)

Answer the following questions in full sentences in Xhosa:

a) USipho uncokola nabani?

b) Ikhaya likaSipho liphi?

c) Uyise kaSipho ngubani?

d) Ngoobani amagama abaninawa bakaSipho?

e) Ngoobani amagama eentombi zakwaMashiya?

f) Umzi wakwaMashiya uphi?

g) Ngubani uWiso?

h) ULiziwe noNothèmba ziintombi zikabani?

i) Ngoobani amagama amahashe akwaMashiya?

j) OoSipho beze ngawaphi amahashe?

(p.113)

Kirsch and Skorge (1979) are also exponents of the direct method. Consider the following:

EKHAYA

1. Kukho uMnumzana Sipho Dlangamandla.
   Kukho uNkosikazi Sindiwe Dlangamandla.
   Kukho uLumkile.
   Kukho uNomsa.
   Kukho ooDlangamandla.

2. Unina uthi: "Vuka Lumkile! Vuka Nomsa!
   Vukani bantwana!
   Hlambani! Nxibani!

   Abantwana bathi: "Ewe mama, siyavuka."

3. ULumkile
uthi: "Molo tata!"

UNomsa
uthi: "Molo mama!"

Abazali
bathi: "Molweni bantwana!"

4. Unina
uyabuza: "Unjani namhlanje Nomsa?"
UNomsa
uyaphendula: "Ndiphila kakuhle enkosi mama."

Uyise
uyabuza: "Wena, uphila njani Lumkile?"

ULumkile
uyaphendula: "Ndisaphila enkosi tata."

Unina
uthi: "Kulungile ke bantwana.
Nifuna ukutya ngoku?
Nilambile na?"

Abantwana
bayaphendula: "Ewe, silambile kakhulu!"

5. Unina uthi: "Hlalani phantsi, bantwana.
Ubuza uyise: Tata, ufuna ukutya ntoni
namhlanje? Ufuna isidudu?"

Uyise
uyaphendula: "Hayi, ndifuna ikofu kuphela.
Ndithanda ukuphunga ikofu
kusasa."

Unina uthi: "Kulungile tata. Ndiyazi
ukuba uthanda kakhulu ikofu!
Nina, bantwana, nifuna ntoni?"

OoLumkile
bayaphendula: "Silambile kakhulu mama.
Sifuna isidudu, isonka
namaqanda. Sifuna ukusela
ubisi."

6. Abantwana bahamba isikolo yonke imihla.
Umnumzana Dlangamandla usebenza yonke imihla.
*Inkosikazi yakhe ihlala ekhaya.
Ithi: "Hambani kakuhle."
Bathi: "Sala kakuhle mama."

7. Kukho abantwana. Bayabaleka.
Baya esikolweni. Bonwabile.

8. Bathanda ukufunda iincwadi. Bathanda
ukulesa. Bathanda ukubhala. Bathanda
ukubala.

9. Sibona abantwana. Bayadlala. Bathanda
ukudlala yonke imihla. Badlala imidlalo.
Inkwenkwe ithanda ukudlala ngebhola kanti
intombazana ikhetha ukudlala ngonopopi.
(pp.1-3)

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*`Umfazi wakhe' - lit. his woman, may also be heard but is considered less polite.

Imibuzo

1 Wena, ubona bani?
Wena ubona intombazana?
Wena, ubona abazali?

3 ULumkile uthini?
UNomsa uthini?
Abazali bathini?

5 Ubuza uyise ntoni?
Uyise ufuna ukutya isidudu?
Uyise uthanda ukuphunga ikofu nini?
Abantwana bafuna ukutya utoni?
(p.5)

The same method is followed by Engelbrecht and Gxilishe (1983). The student is first given a dialogue and then has to answer questions based on it.

a) Wena ubambe umatshini ohambayo. Ulibele ukucima umatshini.
Kwenzeke
ntoni ngawe?_____

b) Wenzakele. Uzisike umnwe.
Bekutheni?_____

c) Xela imigaqo yokhuselo ngozi yale fektri yakho.
(p. 105)

Two persistent problems are how to convey meaning without translating, and how to provide clear explanations without referring to the first language. Another has been how to apply the direct method at the elementary stages of language learning.

The direct method - like other new methods - has extended the repertoire of language instructors in the early stages of teaching, but has added relatively little to the teaching of advanced learners. Because of the insistence on the use of the target language in classroom communication, the direct method can legitimately be seen as a predecessor of present-day immersion techniques (Stern 1983:460).

2.5.3 Audiolingual method

The audiolingual method reflects the descriptive structural and contrastive linguistics of the fifties and sixties. Its psychological basis is behavioural, mainly Skinner (1957), but also influenced by neo-behaviourists such as Osgood (1954).

It views language learning in terms of stimulus and response, operant conditioning and reinforcement. Emphasis is on successful error-free learning in small, well-prepared steps and stages.

Further discussion of the audiolingual method may be found in Chastain (1976), Brown (1980), Rivers (1981), and Stern (1983).
Stern (1983:443) points out that the language laboratory and the audiolingual method of teaching seemed to complement each other perfectly. During the 1950s the habit-formation-through-reinforcement theory in language learning had its heyday. It was inevitable, according to Rivers (1982:6) that the early language laboratory should be seen as the perfect setting for stimulus-response learning. Technology and the learning material provided the stimulus which would automatically elicit the response from the students. Consequently, laboratories were soon emitting a stream of stimuli. "So stimulus-response and language laboratory seemed perfect partners on the road to linguistic mastery," concludes Rivers (1982:6).

In the audiolingual method the dominant emphasis is placed on the fundamental skills i.e. listening and speaking although reading and writing are not neglected. Listening and speaking are given priority and precede reading and writing in the teaching sequence.

Just as with the direct method, the audiolingual method makes considerable demands upon the teacher. It requires near-native articulation and intonation in modelling utterances for students.

The distinctive characteristics of this method are:

- separation of the skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - and the primacy of audiolingual as opposed to graphic skills

- the use of dialogues as the chief means of presenting the language

- emphasis on certain practice techniques, mimicry, memorisation and pattern drills

- the use of the language laboratory and

- establishing a linguistic and psychological theory as a basis for the teaching method.

(Stern 1983:462)

Kirsch and Skorge's (1979) exercises are based on the audiolingual method. These exercises are based on stimulus response. They are repetitive since the student has to repeat what has been read in the dialogue. Questions asked do not require comprehension, but are mere repetition of the dialogue, line by line. The grammar exercises make the student recall the particular grammatical aspect dealt with. Consider the following examples from pages 35, 37, 39, 45 and 46.

INCOKO YOMNXEBA

1. UThemba noLumkile bayancokola.

UThemba: "Yitsho Lumkile!"
ULumkile: "Yitsho Themba!"

UThemba: "Unjani namhlanje?"
ULumkile: "Ndisaphila. Akukho nto imbi. Wena?"
UThemba: "Ndiyaphila. Kambe ke, wenza ntoni ngexesha leholide?"

ULumkile: "Ndiyasebenza."
UThemba: "Oo! Usebenza phi?"

2. ULumkile: "Ndisebenza ederi."
UThemba: "Oo! Usebenza yonke imihla?"
ULumkile: "Hayi, andisebenzi ngempela-veki. Ndisebenza evekini kuphela."

3. UThemba: "Akusebenzi ngempela-veki? Uyanqena ke. Ha! ha! ha!"
ULumkile: "Hayi, andinqeni Themba. Ndifuna ukudlala ibhola

ngempela-veki kodwa evekini
ndisebenza imini yonke."

UThemba: "Kambe ke, nina, nenza ntoni ederi?"

4. ULumkile: "Thina, sisebenza kakhulu
ederi. UDuma usenga nam.
Sisenga iinkomo. Asisengi
bhokhwe!!"

UThemba: "Nithengisa ubisi?"

5. ULumkile: "Hayi, uSinda yena, uthengisa
ubisi kuphela. Akasengi nathi.
Akathandi kusenga. Ukhetha
ukuthengisa ubisi.

6. UThemba: "Usebenzelani?"

ULumkile: "Awu! Abantu basebenzelani
ngesiqhelo? Uyazi kakuhle!
Wonke umntu uyasebenza kuba
ufuna ukufumana imali. Bonke
abantu bathanda ukuthenga
izinto. Mna, ndifuna ukuthenga
ibhayisekile. Wena, akufuni
kufumana mali?"

7. UThemba: "Hayi, mna, ndikhetha ukufunda.

ULumkile: "Tyhini! Uthini? Andiva
kakuhle! Uthi ukhetha ukufunda?
Uyaphosisa!

UThemba: "Hayi, andixoki. Ndithanda
ukufunda. Wena, akufundi konke?"

ULumkile: "Ewe, ndithanda ukufunda kodwa
enyanisweni ndikhetha ukufumana
imali ngexesha leholide.

8. UThemba: "Kambe ke, ufuna ukudlala ibhola namhlanje ngokuhlwa?

ULumkile: "Hayi, Themba, ndilusizi.
Ndisebenza nangokuhlwa!
Yho! ndiyeva ukuba uDuma uyeza.
Siya ederi ngoku."

UThemba: "Kulungile ke. Hamba kakuhle."
ULumkile: "Sala kakuhle."

IMISEBENZI

1. Complete the following sentences in the Negative:

ULumkile uyasebenza kanti uThemba.....
ULumkile ufumana imali kanti uThemba .....
ULumkile noDuma bayasenga kanti amantombazana.....

2. Change the underlined noun into the appropriate Pronoun:

Amakhwenkwe athetha ngo**Sinda**.
Utitshala uthetha ng**abafundi**.
Amadoda athetha n**geenkomo**.
Abantwana bathetha **ngootitshala**.
.....
.....
.....

3. Give the correct form of the Adverbial Locative:

Ndiya (isikolo)	Utitshala ufundisa (imini)
Siya (ivenkile)	Abafundi bafunda (ubusuku)
Wena, uya (idolophu)	Amadoda asebenza (iveki)
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

Riordan (1969) also makes use of the techniques of the audiolingual method in his course material. Consider the following lesson:

A. PERSONAL SCs - Positive
Ndi - (I) Si - (we)
U - (you:sing) ni - (you:plural)

1. Look at the pictures on p. 30. LOOK, LISTEN and REPEAT while identifying yourself with the person in the pictures.

a) Ndityala umbona
b) Ndihlakula umbona
c) Ndithatha i-emele
d) Ndikha amanzi
e) Ndigalela amanzi
.....
.....
.....

2. Now imagine yourself doing the same things together with a few other people. Follow on the pictures answering each question, according to the model:

MODEL:	M	PICTURES 1: NITYALA UMBONA?	S	EWE SITYALA UMBONA

Nihlakula umbona? Ewe, sihlakula umbona.
Nithatha ii-emele? Ewe, sithatha ii-emele.
Nikha amanzi? Ewe, sikha amanzi.
Nigalela amanzi? Ewe, sigalela amanzi.
(p.31)

In each exercise, the writer first gives a cue or model and then the learner is expected to respond to the cue. As most of the exercises are repetitive, the student has no opportunity to be creative.

Another writer who uses the audiolingual method is Daniel (undated). She also uses dialogues to present the language material. The student is expected to listen and repeat. Look at the following:

KUSASA EKHAYA: IN THE MORNING AT HOME/SOGGENS TUIS

1. DIALOGUE/DIALOOG

A: Molo, Nomsa! Usaphila?
B: Molo, Liziwe! Ndisaphila enkosi.
A: Uvuka nini?
B: Ndivuka kusasa.
A: Wenza ntoni?
B: Ndiya egumbini lokuhlamba.
A: Ubona ntoni apho?
B: Ndibona ibhafu, isitya, iimpompo, itawuli, isepha.
A: Wenza ntoni?
B: Ndihlamba umzimba kakuhle.
A: Uhlamba ntoni?
B: Ndihlamba ubuso, iindlebe, amehlo, iingalo, izandla,imilenze, iinyawo.
A: Uhlamba ngantoni?
B: Ndihlamba ngamanzi nesepha.
A: Usula umzimba?
B: Ewe. Ndisula umzimba. Ndihlamba amazinyo. Ndinxiba iimpahla.

2. **EXERCISE/OEFENING**

"Listen to the dialogue and repeat.
Luister na die dialoog en herhaal."
(p.16)

Engelbrecht and Gxilishe (1983) sometimes use dialogues, memorisation and pattern drills in their course. Compare the following:

1. Substitution Drill. Vervangingsoefeninge.
   a) Ndifuna ukuthatha iholide

NdifunaUkuthatha iholide
UfunaUkugoduka
SifunaUkuya eKapa
UfunaUkusebenza

EXERCISE/OEFENING

Listen and repeat/Luister en herhaal.

a) V_1: Ndifuna ukuthatha iholide
L:
V_2: Ndifun' ukuthath' iholide
L:

b) V_1: Ufuna ukugoduka
L:
V_2: Ufun' ukugoduka
L:
.....
.....
.....

2. Listen and repeat the questions and answers.
Luister en herhaal die vrae en antwoorde.

i) V_1: Ndingayithatha nini iholide?
L:
V_2: Ungayithatha kwiveki ezayo
L:

ii) V_1: Ndingaya ixesha elingakanani ekhaya?
L:
V_2: Ungaya inyanga enye.
L:

iii) V_1: Ndingasebenza nini?
L:
.....
.....
.....

(p.57, p.59)

These courses are accompanied by audiocassettes.

Although audiolingualism has been severely criticised by Chomsky (1966), Chastain (1976), Benseler (1980), and Rivers (1981), it has nevertheless contributed towards the development of language teaching. Its approach is based on linguistic and psychological principles (Brown 1980:126) and made language learning accessible to large groups of learners.

2.5.4 Cognitive-code method

More recently the cognitive-code method has gained prominence in learning and teaching. This method is based on the view that learning a language is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical and lexical patterns of a second language, largely through study and analysis of these patterns. Pimsleur and Quinn (1971), Cook (1982) and Stern (1983) all agree that the cognitive-code method emphasises the conscious acquisition of language as a meaningful system. They point out that this method is based on cognitive psychology and transformational grammar. The cognitive-code method reflects the theoretical reorientation in linguistics and psycholinguistics that was initiated by Chomsky.

Provided the student has a proper degree of cognitive control over the structures of the language, facility will develop automatically with the use of the language in meaningful situations.

There is no doubt that this method, concentrating as it does on the learner's processes of knowing rather than on mechanical procedures imposed upon him by the teacher, is in keeping with the anti-authoritarian, learner-centred educational outlook which is sweeping through much of the world. At another level of psychological learning theory, however, the cognitive-code method signals a reflection of stimulus-response models.

Broadly speaking, the goal of cognitive teaching is the same as that proposed by audiolingual theories (compare Chastain (1976), Benseler (1980) and Stern (1983)). However, certain differences in immediate objectives are apparent. The cognitive-code method emphasises the control of the language in all its manifestations as a coherent and meaningful system. It is a kind of consciously acquired competence which the learner can then put to use in real-life situations.

The cognitive-code method views language teaching as a creative activity utilising mental processes in a conscious analytical manner. The cognitive-code method aims at teaching

the system of the language through formal grammatical explanations and analysis and through cognitive exercises which necessitate understanding of the meaning at all times. `The term cognition' writes Rivers (1973:49), `implies a conscious acquisition of competence, followed by a conscious application of the `competence' in the conscious development of performance skills'.

Chastain (1976:156-157) proposes the following order of learning:

STEP 1: Comprehension of new grammatical concepts which are presented deductively.

STEP 2: Practice in selection of linguistic forms to fit the context in exercises.

STEP 3: The study of reading and listening materials with some opportunity provided for students to produce messages to someone else.

Chastain further suggests that the mind is viewed as an active agent in the learning process. According to this theory, knowledge is acquired by the learner and not implanted by the teacher. The individual should be an active participant in the language acquisition process. Cognitive psychologists believe that learning is controlled by the individual and not by his environment which merely influences learning.

The mainspring of the cognitive approach is meaningful learning as opposed to drilling and memorisation. In order to use the language effectively and correctly, the student must know the grammar of the language. The varied nature of language necessitates the teaching of the language structures. This method as outlined by Chastain has not yet been fully applied in Xhosa language courses.

2.6 Communicative approaches

Brumfit and Roberts (1983:84) rightly maintain that a feature of the methods developed up to the time of the audiolingual method is their assumption that the structural, or strictly linguistic aspects of the target language pose the greatest problem to the learner. In reaction against this feature of the audiolingual method, new methods were based on Chomskyan linguistics (compare cognitive-code method).

However, some linguistic research has led to approaches emphasising not so much linguistic competence as the goal for language teaching but communicative competence.

Sociolinguistic studies have prompted a more detailed examination of the way people interact and of the kind of language they use to accomplish various things in life.

This has led to the awareness that learning to use language appropriately and learning to engage, not simply in speech (compare grammatical categories) but in speech acts (compare functions), is one of the important aspects of language learning. Mastering more than just the structures of a language, and indeed, more than the language itself, implies learning how to behave in a certain culture.

2.7 Humanistic approaches

While language teaching has taken into account the notion of communicative competence, it has also attempted to integrate aspects of the learner's personality more fully into the learning process. Brumfit and Roberts (1983:85) point out that what seems to underlie certain new approaches is the idea that learning a foreign language is, almost more than anything else, a question of overcoming psychological inhibitions and emotional problems so that one can bring one's inherent intellectual resourcefulness into play. This general trend is sometimes referred to as "whole-person" or "holistic" learning methods (compare Jung 1985:35).

The techniques themselves, as may be seen in Brumfit and Roberts (1983:86), often reflect elements of counselling and drama therapy, and stress co-operation between learners rather than competition.

These methods are known as Suggestopedia, pioneered in Bulgaria by Lozanov, the Silent Way, developed in the United States by Gattegno, Community Language Learning, also developed in the United States by Curran, and Total Physical Response by the psychiatrist J.J. Asher.

2.7.1 Suggestopedia

Georgi Lozanov, a Bulgarian psychiatrist, who laid down the principles of Suggestopedia, conceives of man as consisting of two planes. The surface plane is what language teachers normally address themselves to. Below the surface lies a vast reservoir of learning potential which must be tapped. In order to do this students entering a language class assume surrogate identities. This helps them to cast off their everyday personalities with all the conventions of society which hinder learning. Once the protective mail people tend to surround themselves with has been discarded by means of `desuggestion', the learner is

open to suggestions by the teacher that he can learn faster and memorise better than previously assumed (Jung 1985:35).
Schuster and Gritton (1985:19-20), outline three principles on which the method is based.

1. Unity of the conscious and paraconscious. According to Lozanov (1978), our being is always integrated, our conscious and paraconscious minds always act as one. We cannot act as split personalities; we merely act differently at different times. But whatever behaviour we choose, we do so in a unified way at that particular moment.

2. Joy and absence of tension. According to Schuster and Gritton (1985:20), people just do not learn very well when unhappy, confused, angry, sad, etc. Such negative emotions are accompanied by psychological tension which impedes learning. The teacher needs to relax the students prior to learning and during learning, and to make the learning process enjoyable.

3. Suggestion is the link to the reserves of the mind. Suggestion is used to improve memory and learning in the suggestopedic class. This really is the basis for the word "Suggestopedia": "suggesto" (suggestion) "pedia" (learning).

2.7.2 The Silent Way

The thinking of Caleb Gattegno, developer of the Silent Way, is defined in the following way by Stevick (1980:37): `In Gattegno's view, as I have read him, the Actor is the Self, the Stage is the whole world outside the Self, and the Play is limited in Time.'

The teacher remains silent most of the time. His job is to tease out the student's learning capacity. To begin with, he may place a handful of coloured rods on the table, pick one out, motion the students to be silent, pronounce the foreign word associated with the object once and direct the students to repeat it.
"The important thing here is the content of pieces; that the teacher refrains from ostensibly reinforcing correct answers so that the student gets a "feel" for when he is right or wrong; that in other words, he gains self-confidence and learns to trust himself." (Jung 1985:35, 36).

2.7.3 Community Language Learning (CLL)

Charles Curran, the originator of Community Language Learning, calls his technique a "whole-person" model, according to Jung (1985:36). The community of learners/clients sit

in a circle facing each other, whereas the teacher/counsellor remains outside. The students in the circle are allowed to say whatever comes to mind in their native language, whereupon the counsellor provides the target equivalents for imitation/repetition. As a rule the target-language utterances are recorded for later inspection.

2.7.4 Total physical response

The method of Total Physical Response is the invention of the psychologist J.J. Asher. It does what it says: teachers give commands in the foreign language and students execute these i.e. they respond physically. The rationale behind this technique is the assumption that learning a language should involve both body and mind (Jung 1985:36). Students and teachers alike **perform** the actions described by the verbal expression.

2.8 An eclectic/integrated approach

There is a gradual move towards an integrated approach in second language teaching methodology. Brown (1980:243) refers to "a quiet revolution that has come about gradually". He qualifies this revolution as being "cautiously eclectic". In other words it engages in intelligent use of selected approaches based on an intelligent and broad theory of second language acquisition.

The use of these selected approaches resulted from the fact that although much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of different methods of teaching foreign/second languages, it is really difficult to demonstrate scientifically what is or what is not a "good" method.

Justifying the use of an eclectic approach, Robinett (1978: 16) argues that learning depends upon many variables which cannot be controlled. No one approach can be expected to produce the same results in all cases; nor should one approach be used exclusively.

Ridge (1983:74), also identifying with informed eclecticism argues that it is widely practised and advocated. With the learner as the central actor in the language learning process, the teacher is encouraged to make pedagogic decisions that are based on meeting his needs.

The position adopted by Ridge (1983) on informed eclecticism is acceptable. It implies that the teacher needs to be scientific in his selection of methods and techniques. Because of uncertainty as to the best method, the teacher should experiment scientifically. In other

words he has to define his aims with accuracy and keep in mind specific needs, if he is to make appropriate choices of teaching techniques and approaches.

A haphazard approach is discredited. A language teacher should first have insight into the approach and techniques on which a specific method is based.

2.9 Summary

In an attempt to give a perspective on where language teaching is going at present, language practitioners should be aware of some of the underlying theoretical principles of the methods in second/foreign language teaching, as well as the disciplines which influence language teaching and language learning.

The above discussion has mainly centred on the traditional approach. Although Roberts (1982) contends that the traditional approach is obsolete each of its methods contributed new insights. The grammar translation method and the cognitive-code method for example recognised language as an orderly system of rules which a learner, at least to a certain extent, can consciously acquire by study methods.

Both the grammar translation and the audiolingual methods have used the transfer/interference phenomenon from the first language as a reference system.

The direct method and the audiolingual method have recognised that the learner should immerse himself in the second language. Thus positive aspects of the traditional method approach should be incorporated in the latter two approaches which Roberts (1982:95) refers to as being very much alive.

Stern (1983) maintains that all the methods emphasise the need for systematic practice. He identifies two major weaknesses common to all the methods discussed. One is that they represent a relatively fixed combination of language teaching beliefs. They are also characterised by the over-emphasis on single aspects as the central issue of language teaching and learning. All the methods **make assumptions which have not been tested critically and systematically against the realities of actual learning.**

2.10 Conclusion

Traditional methods, as has been stated previously, have commonly identified the learning of a language with acquiring mastery of its grammatical or structural organisation. Wilkins (1976b:2) points out that the majority of language courses and syllabuses have always been based on a synthetic language teaching strategy; one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built up. The validity of a synthetic approach to language teaching has been questioned. It is not generally denied that what is learned through a grammatical syllabus is of value to the learner. It is, however, suggested that this is not the essential or the most effective way of designing language courses and that, in any case, language learning is not complete when the content of a grammatical syllabus has been mastered (compare Wilkins (1976b), Johnson (1982), Roberts (1982) and Littlewood (1984)).

One can agree with Wilkins (1976b:11) that people who speak the same language share communicative competence rather than grammatical competence. This means that the learner has to learn rules of communication as well as rules of grammar.

A communicative approach offers a wider perspective on language. Language is considered not only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs. Language course designers are not only concerned with language forms, but also their functions. They can therefore combine the newer functional view of language with the traditional structural view, in order to achieve a more complete communicative perspective. This will enable language teachers to give a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language as a means of communication.

A communicative approach provides a wider view of language learning. In particular, it creates more awareness of the fact that it is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate target language structures. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real contexts. The communicative approach develops the learners' ability to use the language to communicate rather than to master individual structures.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.1 Definition of language

Scholars of linguistic science have always concerned themselves with defining language. Since, however, man knows very little about the way in which human language originated, linguistics does not yet offer a single accurate definition of language. What seems certain so far is the fact that language must be explained in terms of its own field.

Brown (1980:4) makes the interesting point that a definition is really a condensed version of a theory and a theory is an extended definition. Consider the following definitions of language:

> Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols (Sapir 1921:7).

> Language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or interact (Finocchiaro: 1964:8).

> Language is a learned arbitrary system of vocal sound symbols with which people can communicate within a culture (Fraenkel 1965:16).

> Language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalised signs, sound, gestures or marks having understood meaning (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language 1961:1270).

Taken together, these definitions give some indication of the properties that linguists think of as being essential to language. Consolidating the above definitions of language will yield the following composite definition:

- language is systematic
- language is a set of arbitrary symbols which are primarily vocal, but also visual and have conventionalised meanings to which they refer
- language is used for communication
- language operates in a speech community or culture
- language is essentially human
- language is acquired by all people in much the same way - language and language learning both have universal characteristics.

The above consolidation takes the view that languages are systems of symbols designed for the purpose of communication. Language symbols here are the vocal signals that are actually transmitted from sender to receiver in the process of communication and interaction.

Chomsky (1957:13), however, defines language from a theoretical linguist's perspective.

> From now on I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.

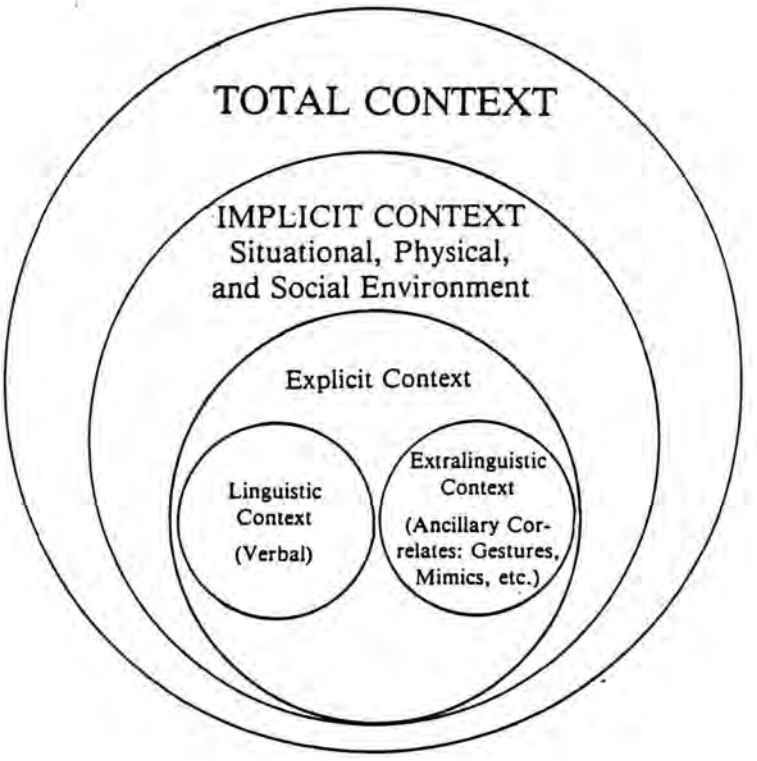
Lyons (1981:35) distinguishes between theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics. He explains that theoretical linguistics is the study of language and languages with a view to constructing a theory of their structure and functions within theoretical linguistics. This view disregards any practical applications that the investigation of language and language learning might have.

On the other hand, applied linguistics is concerned with the application of the concepts and findings of linguistics to a variety of practical tasks, including language teaching. Lyons (1981:7) rightly observes that Chomsky's definition says nothing about the communicative function of either natural or non-natural languages, it says nothing about the symbolic nature of their elements or sequences. Its purpose is to focus attention on the purely structural properties of language (See also Valdman 1980). Chomsky's definition also seems to suggest that these properties can be investigated from a mathematically precise point of view.

Since this study is aimed at language teaching, this definition which emphasises the theoretical aspect of linguistics will not be used. The ability to communicate is the main focus of this study, so knowing how to apply the language instead of theorising about it is of greater interest.

3.2 Communicative competence

The introduction of the concept of communicative rather than linguistic competence represents a broadening of the scope of linguistic inquiry to include the total communicative situation as depicted by Valdman (1980:84) in the following diagram.



Contextual Levels of Linguistic Communication

It draws on the ethnography of communication which is concerned with interactional analysis and focuses essentially on communicative behaviour and its role in the conduct of social life.

It follows then that communicative competence subsumes the ability to interpret accurately and correctly produced well-formed sentences, to use these in discourse appropriate to social situations, and to discern and employ a variety of subcodes depending on th characteristics of the communicative situation (Valdman 1980:85).

It involves knowing not only that language code, but also what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. It deals with the social and cultural knowledge speakers are presumed to have to enable them to use and interpret linguistic forms (Saville-Troike 1982:22-23).

Communicative competence also extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to, how to talk to persons of different status and roles, what non-verbal behaviour is appropriate in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversations, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline and the like; in short, everything involving the use of language and other communicative dimensions in particular settings (Saville-Troike 1982:23).

For Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) the notion of communicative competence comprises grammatical competence as proposed by Chomsky (1965:3) but also contextual or sociolinguistic competence.

Arguing for the rejection of Chomsky's definition of competence, Campbell and Wales (1970) point out that it excludes by far the most important linguistic ability: to produce or understand utterances which are not so much grammatical but more important, **appropriate to the context in which they are made**. By context they mean both the situational and verbal context of the utterances. They re-emphasise the stand taken by Hymes (1972:278): "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless."

Hymes has established that applied linguistics needs a theory that can deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence and the constitutive role of social, cultural features (compare Saville Troike 1982). He argues that:

> If an adequate theory of language users and language use is to be developed, it seems that judgements must be recognised to be in fact not of two kinds (grammaticality

> and acceptability) but of four. And if linguistic theory is to be integrated with a theory of communication and culture this fourfold distinction must be stated in a sufficiently generalised way:
>
> - whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
> - whether (and to what degree) something is feasible;
> - whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate;
> - whether (and to what degree) something is done
>
> (pp. 284-286)

In an attempt to explain Hymes' four generalisations Munby (1978:15) claims that these reflect the speaker-hearer's

- grammatical (formally possible),
- psycholinguistic (implementationally feasible)
- social cultural (contextually appropriate) and
- de facto (actually occurring) knowledge and ability for use.

Chomsky's notion of grammatical competence is dealt within only one of four parameters of communicative competence. Hymes is concerned with the fact that a language user's competence entails judgement and abilities related to and interdependent with sociocultural features.

In summarising Hymes' theory, one could say that a broad theory of competence shows the ways in which the systematically possible, the feasible, and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret actually occurring cultural behaviour (compare Cooper 1968, Widdowson in both 1971 and 1975).

As Munby (1978) points out, Hymes's formulation of competence is preferable to Chomsky's since, in incorporating grammatical competence with communicative competence, it emphasises this all-important relationship. Hymes's formulation avoids impossible and misleading conclusions that might arise from separating grammatical competence and communicative competence, such as that grammatical competence and communicative competence should be taught separately, and that grammar is not an essential factor in communicating through language, or that it is somehow not related to communicative ability.

As discussed earlier, Chomsky's approach to language study is from a theoretical-linguistic viewpoint. This explains why his notions of competence and performance are not concerned with the sociocultural dimension that is essential to any study concerned with the communicative aspects of languages. Roberts and Brumfit (1982:69) warn against misunderstanding the purpose of Chomsky's approach to the study of the language: that it is not focused on the details of the individual, but concerned with a faculty, or mental property, with which all human beings are in principle endowed, irrespective of factors such as intelligence or the conditions in which they are raised. It is doubtful whether the concept of communicative competence would have developed if Chomsky had not put forward the notion of linguistic competence in the first place. He revitalised theoretical linguistics. Without this we might not now be in a position to appraise the problem (Munby 1978:20).

Like Munby's, Hymes's conception of communicative competence is mainly concerned with the fact that a language user's competence entails judgements and abilities related to sociocultural features. These judgements, abilities and sociocultural features are interdependent. Hymes seems to have identified an idea which corresponds with teachers' intuitions, namely, that learning a language is tantamount to learning its people's socio-culture as well. Roberts (1982:97) notes that Hymes' theory has influenced language teaching, resulting in what is now known as the communicative approach.

3.3 An integrative theory of communicative competence

As an extension of Hymes' theory, Canale and Swain (1980) proposed an integrative theory of communicative competence. In their view, an integrative theory of communicative competence may be regarded as one in which there is a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles; knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse. This theory might also be viewed as integrative in that it focuses on speaking, listening, writing and reading (Canale and Swain 1980:20).

The theoretical framework they propose (1980:27) is based on important principles which they feel must guide the development of a communicative approach for a general second language programme.

Communicative competence is composed minimally of

- grammatical competence
- sociolinguistic competence and
- strategic competence.

They argue that there is no strong theoretical or empirical argument for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence or strategic competence. They point out that the primary goal of a communicative approach should be to facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner. Success is not likely to result from overemphasis on one form of competence over the other in a second language programme.

A communicative approach should be based on and respond to the learner's **communication needs**. These needs should be specified with respect to

- grammatical competence (e.g. the levels of grammatical accuracy that are required in oral and written communication)
- sociolinguistic competence (e.g. needs relating to setting, topic, communicative functions) and
- strategic competence (e.g. the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other competencies).

The second language learner must have the opportunity to take part in **meaningful communicative interaction** with highly competent speakers of the language, ie. to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations. This principle is significant not only for classroom activities but for testing as well. Canale and Swain feel that exposure to realistic communication situations is crucial if communicative competence is to lead to communicative confidence.

A communication-orientated second language programme must provide the learners with the information, practice, and much of the experience needed to meet their communicative needs in the second language.

In addition, the learners should be taught **about language** primarily (although not exclusively) through grammatical categories, communicative functions, appropriateness, rules of discourse and registers. The learners should also be taught about the second

language culture primarily (although not exclusively) through the social studies programme in order to provide them with the sociocultural knowledge of the second language group that is necessary in drawing references about the social meanings or values of utterances.

These principles encompass a wide spectrum of second language learning. They are also comprehensive in that they cover all the important aspects related to the learner-identification of the needs for effective communication, responding to genuine communication needs and learning about the language.

In a revised theoretical framework of communicative competence, Canale (1983:16) provides four areas of knowledge and skill. These are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence remains concerned with mastery of the verbal or non-verbal language code (Canale 1983:7). Included here are features and rules of the language such as vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and linguistic semantics. Such competence focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances: as such grammatical competence will be important for any second language programme. He points out however, that it is still not clear which current grammar theory could be selected to characterise this competence, nor in what ways a grammar theory is directly relevant to second language pedagogy (Canale 1983:7).

Sociolinguistic competence, according to Canale, addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood **appropriately** in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purpose of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction (see Hymes 1969 and Saville-Troike 1982).

As far as appropriateness is concerned, Canale (1983:7) refers to the following forms:

> Appropriateness of utterances refers to both appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form. Appropriateness of meaning concerns the extent to which particular communicative functions, attitudes and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation. Appropriateness of

> form concerns the extent to which a given meaning is represented in a verbal and/or non-verbal form that is proper in a given sociolinguistic context.

Discourse competence concerns mastery of combining grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres (Canale and Swain 1980). By genre, Canale and Swain mean a type of text, for example, oral and written narrative, an argumentative essay, a scientific report, a business letter, and a set of instructions each representing a different genre. Unity of a text is achieved through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning. Canale and Swain (1980:9) explain the meaning of cohesion and coherence:

> Cohesion deals with how utterances are linked structurally and facilitates interpretation of a text. Coherence refers to the relationships among the different meanings, in a text where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes.

> Strategic competence is composed of mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action for two main reasons:

- to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting conditions in actual communication (e.g. momentary inability to recall an idea or grammatical form) or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence; and

- to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g. deliberately slow and soft speech for rhetorical effect).

Commenting on the above theoretical framework, Canale (1983:12) points out that the four areas of competence distinguished here serve only to illustrate what communicative competence (minimally) includes: they are levels of analysis that can be distinguished as part of the theoretical framework. He points out that the question of how these components interact with one another has been largely ignored in his study. He warns that this theoretical framework is not a model of communicative competence, where model implies some specification of the manner and order in which the components interact and in which the various competencies are normally acquired.

3.4 Implications for a communicative approach to language teaching.

Adopting the theoretical framework proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) has important implications for four main areas of second language teaching:

- syllabus design
- language teaching methodology
- teacher training skills and
- development of material.

The reason for proposing a functionally organised approach for all stages of second language learning concerns the validity of the material and the syllabus on which it is based. Canale and Swain (1980:32) believe that a functionally based communicative approach, in particular one in which units are organised and labelled according to communicative functions is more likely to have positive consequences for learner motivation than is a grammatically based communicative approach, in particular one in which units are organised and labelled according to grammatical forms. Students who are uninterested in, and frustrated by a grammatically organised second language programme, and perform poorly, may perform better in a programme where emphasis is on use of language in meaningful communication.

A functionally organised communicative approach may be associated less with the negative feelings of frustrations, negative attitudes and low levels of motivation, and more with a highly useful and visible purpose of second language study, communication.

One further remark about syllabus organisation is that a more natural integration of knowledge of the second culture in general may perhaps be accomplished through a communicative approach.

As far as teaching methodology is concerned it is crucial that classroom activities reflect in the most optimally direct manner those communication activities that the learner is most likely to engage in. Furthermore, communication activities must be as meaningful as possible and be characterised by aspects of **genuine communication**.

With regard to teacher-training, Canale and Swain (1980:33) stress that the teacher will have to create situations which allow students to develop communication skills. Second, in view of the greater emphasis placed on the teacher's role as an instigator of and participant

in meaningful communication, the teacher **must** have a fairly **high level** of communicative competence in the second language in order to carry out this role effectively.

One may agree with Wilkins (1983:36) that it is the ingenuity of the teacher which determines how far contexts can be created on which the learner is willing to attempt spoken communication with others. He points out that the teacher must have the necessary **confidence** and **ability**. The teacher must have the imagination and ingenuity to devise suitable activities and possess the classroom management skills to put them into effect. However, Wilkins makes it clear that it is unlikely that teachers whose own competence in the foreign language is weak would feel able to handle the considerable professional and linguistic demands of this kind of teaching (1983:37).

Canale and Swain (1980) and Johnson (1977) suggest that the development of functionally organised textbooks is still premature, owing to the lack of research on communicative syllabus design. However, of late much material has been produced, especially in Britain. Also, much research on syllabus design has since been undertaken.

The arguments raised by Canale and Swain (1980) on development of material have serious implications for the teaching of Xhosa as a third language (L_3). For a long time and even at present a lot of material has been designed on the basis of a grammatical approach. This has had negative results in that the learner knows the grammar but cannot apply it when communicating. Wilkins (1975:174) poses the question: the learner may know the word **warning**, but does he know **how** to **warn**?

Communication activities should be meaningful, making learners want to put into practice whatever language they have learnt. The material learnt would have to be characterised by aspects of genuine communication.

The theoretical implications of the integrated theory of communicative competence as postulated by Canale and Swain will be used as a basis for further discussion in the study.

3.5 Communication in language teaching

The common purpose of communicative language teaching, according to Stern (1981:133), is to bring language learners into closer contact with the target language community.

Wilkins (1983:34) takes this a step further by stating that the aim of communicative language teaching is to produce in individuals the ability to create and to construct utterances (spoken and written) which have the desired social value or purpose. That is to say, the individual, in response to some external stimulus or in the process of initiating communication, conceives a message the exact nature of which neither he (she) nor we could accurately predict, and is able to construct and utter the linguistic form which conveys that message. The object of language teaching would then be to maximise the extent to which this can be done. However, the limitations of classroom learning are such that the student can never reach the competence displayed by the native speaker.

When people talk of communicating in a language they tend to think of engaging in conversational interaction, but if linguistic communication is the transmission of messages from a producer to a receiver, then reading, writing, and listening are equally forms of communication. Wilkins points out that there is nothing in the notion of communication as such that intrinsically favours conversation. Consequently communicative language teaching is unbiased with regard to the four language skills. All or any of them may be presented by means of a communicative approach (Johnson and Morrow 1981, Wilkins 1983).

Canale (1983:3) formulates the following characteristics of communication:

- it is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction
- it involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message
- it takes place in discourse and sociocultural contents which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances
- it is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions
- it always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, or to promise)
- it involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived language and
- it is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

To facilitate communication in language teaching, it is therefore important that the teacher develop in the student the competence to perform in `real life'. It is also necessary to supply the student accordingly, not only with grammatical knowledge, but with fluency, effective strategies and more generally with `theory of speech act' related to a given culture (Roberts 1982:100).

However, it is true that more and more attention is now being focussed upon teaching procedures than has hitherto been the case. Attempts are being made to evolve a communicative methodology. In this respect, Morrow (1981:59-66) has stated the principles of such a methodology to be:

- Know what you are doing (i.e. make sure each part of the lesson focuses on some operation the student might want to perform in the target language).

- The whole is more than the sum of the parts (i.e. communication cannot be broken down into its component parts without its nature being thus destroyed - what is needed is the ability to work in the context of the whole).

- The processes are as important as the forms (a method which aims to develop the ability of students to communicate in a foreign language will aim to replicate as far as possible the process of communication).

- To learn it, do it (...only the learner can learn...only by practising communicative activities can we learn to communicate).

- Mistakes are not always a mistake (.a communicative method must go back to firm principles in deciding how it will reach its aim of developing the communicative ability of the students).

3.6 Teaching of structure

The teaching of structure was condemned earlier on in this study (compare para. 2.10). Many language practitioners who use the communicative language teaching approach saw it as axiomatic that they should <u>not</u> teach the structures of the target language but something else, something rather less tangible, usually its functions (James 1983:110).

However, a number of practitioners as well as theoreticians have opted to differ from this viewpoint. Wilkins (1976:66) for instance is quite clear in his endorsement of the centrality of structure or grammar or form in language teaching:

> The acquisition of the grammatical system of a language remains a most important element in language learning. The grammar is the means through which linguistic creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of the grammar would lead to a serious limitation on the capacity for communication. Tentative findings on the tolerance levels of native speakers would suggest that native speakers pay more attention to second language learners' grammatical usage than to their sociolinguistic use of language (compare Carroll 1978). It is reasonable and important, however, to adopt the position that second language learning will proceed more effectively when grammatical usage is not abstracted from meaningful context (see also Hymes 1972 Munby 1978 and Canale and Swain 1980).

Munby (1978) reveals that Hymes, Cooper, Widdowson and others have drawn attention to the equally important factor of contextual appropriacy. He claims that the view that communicative competence includes grammatical competence is to be preferred to the view that it does not, since the former view logically excludes two possible and misleading conclusions. The first is that grammatical competence and communicative competence should be taught separately, or the former should be taught before the latter. The second is that grammatical competence is not an essential component of communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980:5) find the assertion that grammatical competence is essential convincing and important. Just as Hymes (1972) was able to say that there are rules of grammar that would be useless without rules of language use, so they feel that there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar. This position is accepted. The teaching of grammar should however be integrated and be within a context.

3.7 Syllabus design

While it would be absurd to deny that some learners have developed an entirely acceptable language proficiency through courses with an essentially grammatical syllabus, there are grounds for thinking that such an approach is not necessarily the most effective in at least

some language-learning situations. Wilkins (1975) ascribes this to the fact that a grammatical syllabus does not take sufficient account of the fact that language is a means of communication.

There is often an inadequate match between the type of language that is taught and the type which will be demanded by the uses to which the learner will be putting the language. Things are taught because they are there in the textbook, not because they particularly suit the learner's needs. As a result some of what is learnt is superfluous and the learning process is thereby rendered less efficient (see also Harlow et al 1980, Van der Walt 1979 and Johnson 1982).

In 1971 the Council of Europe convened a team of experts whose brief was to consider the feasibility of developing a language teaching system suitable for teaching all the languages used in the Council's member countries. The main thrust of the proposals was that a system should be devised to teach language to adults who would be moving back and forth from one country to another as guest workers (rather than as immigrants) and who would require rapid training in fairly well-specified areas of their second languages for occupational purposes (Yalden 1983:18). One member of that team, D.A. Wilkins, had the particular task of developing a system of categories by means of which it would be possible to specify the communicative needs of the adult learner working within the European context, writes Johnson (1982:34). Wilkins developed two types of categories. One type of category is what he calls the category of communicative function, (Wilkins 1973). A communicative function is, in the most general terms, a use to which the language may be put, (Johnson 1982:34). Examples of functions taken at random from Wilkins' list are:

greeting; expressing sympathy; expressing disapproval; warning; inviting; requesting and giving information; agreeing.

Wilkins calls his second type of category the semantico- grammatical. Here are some examples:

duration; frequency; quantity; dimension; time; space.

Johnson mentions that another word which expresses the same idea is the word notion. In fact, according to Johnson, Van Ek (of the Council of Europe team) and others use the word notion as a convenient way of referring to the semantico-grammatical category just as they have used function as an abbreviation for the category communicative function. Wilkins and others speak of notional syllabuses meaning syllabuses which are based on an

inventory listing **both** functions **and** semantico-grammatical items. Wilkins (1976:34) emphasises that the whole basis of a notional approach to language teaching derives from the conviction that what people want to do through language is more important than mastery of the language as an unapplied system. The syllabus must therefore emphasise the uses to which language items can be put. The language functions now become the starting point of syllabus design and they are the objectives of language learning and teaching.

The notional syllabus therefore entails a structuring of language and language teaching in terms of content rather than form and learner needs rather than tradition (Harlow **et al** 1980:12). The principal organising factor of the syllabus is no longer a grammatical structure chosen by such criteria as lack of complexity and similarity to native language. Instead these criteria are used as secondary organisers and attempts are made to determine what the learners want to say (the notion they have in mind) and what they want to achieve (the function). With this change made, function and notion become the principal organising factors of the syllabus. There is an immense range of notions and functions for which the native speaker will regularly use language during the course of his everyday life. If a syllabus inventory of reasonable proportions is to be introduced, a criterion for selecting these notions and functions must be developed, which a particular group of learners will find especially useful. These may then be taught to the exclusion of other, less necessary ones. How can the particularly useful notions and functions be identified? This is a question which the Council of Europe team, particularly Richterich (1973) and Van Ek (1975), have attempted to answer by looking closely at the language needs of groups of learners, observes Johnson (1982:40). Richterich (1973:32) defines language needs as the requirements which arise from the use of a language in the multitude of situations which may arise in the social lives of individuals and groups. By analysing the language needs of specific groups of learners, it should be possible to identify those notions and functions it will be most valuable to teach. For the application of this principle, see Odendaal (1980) and Proctor and Botha (1980).

Needs analysis provides a means of arriving at a manageable list of notions and functions for teaching purposes. Indeed, it is one of the great advantages of this approach that it enables discrimination between various learner types, and to produce syllabus inventories (and courses) specifically geared to the needs. But this advantage brings with it a problem, namely that at adult level, teachers often find themselves dealing with heterogeneous groups of students.

In order to obviate this problem, the Council of Europe team developed what they call a unit./credit system, (Johnson 1982). In this system areas of language use are divided into units. Since different areas of use are relevant to the needs of different groups of learners according to their specific requirements, the students are guided into a choice of which units to cover. Credits are given for units completed and when a number of credits have been gained, a qualification is given.

Regarding the concept of the common core, the team recognised that there would be areas of interest common to all students, whatever their particular situations and specialisations. For instance, there would be a common core of functions relevant to secretaries as much as to engineers, to doctors as much as to mechanics. This might include such functions as greetings, introducing, inviting, asking for information - the functions associated with the general area of social life, rather than with any particular occupation. It seems reasonable to assume that all students (adults and children) will need to be able to do such things in the foreign language. Each learning level in the Council of Europe's unit/credit system has a common core of units, alongside others of specialised interest. (Johnson 1982).

Criticism has been levelled against communicative syllabuses which draw on the **Threshold Level** syllabus (Van Ek and Alexander 1980), an entirely subjective and speculative document based largely on the intuitions of its computer (Yalden 1983).

The **Threshold** syllabus locks any form of validation, and even a cursory examination of it suggests that it contains major deficiencies. An example of the sort of research that is needed to help validate such taxonomies is found in a study by Pearson (1983) as quoted by Yalden (1983:20). She collected empirical data on two speech acts from the **Threshold** list, agreement and disagreement, and how these speech acts were performed conversationally by native speakers. These findings were compared with the way these speech acts are represented in communicative syllabuses and texts. Not surprisingly, there was a low degree of fit between the empirical real-world conversation data and the textbooks.

Widdowson (1979:248) claims that the notional syllabus still presents language as an inventory of units, of items for accummulation and storage. In this regard it does not differ much from a structural approach: the isolates are notional rather than structural, but they are isolates all the same.

Wilkins (1976b:9) makes a similar point. The problem is to relate the different parts of the notional syllabus to one another because a broad semantic grouping does not necessarily bring together items that are likely to co-occur in real language use. Van Ek (1977),

however, does not indicate how the different parts of the notional syllabus can be related to one another. On the other hand, the problem is overcome if the syllabus is one for specific purposes (ESP) since the objectives in this type of syllabus are very clearly defined. Where subsequent language use is ill-defined, it is very difficult to predict exactly the communicative needs of the learners. This is the case with most general courses at secondary and tertiary level which are based on this type of syllabus.

A more fundamental problem the notional syllabus presents is the contextualisation of language items (Van der Walt 1979:38). Language cannot be taught without teaching meaning as well. But the meaning must derive from the learner's meaningful use of the language. If a notional approach is adopted, there will be problems with situational coherence. As Wilkins (1974:148) points out, there are many different ways of saying the same thing, and the notional syllabus aims to teach the learner to select the one that suits the purpose of this utterance.

Another aim is to teach a language function that is universal, one that can be used in different situations. The learner must be able to generalise. A functional unit such as expressing displeasure will include a number of examples of situations in which a person might need to express displeasure. There would thus be coherence only from a functional point of view: such a unit would lack situational coherence because it would contain examples of language use in various situations.

The ideal would be to have a syllabus with a dual purpose: to ensure maximum generalisation of individual functions and coherent presentation of different language functions as they occur within one situation (Wilkins 1976:13). This is not possible with the notional syllabus as it is presently conceived.

Widdowson (1979:253) makes a more serious criticism, saying that communication does not take place through the linguistic exponents of functions and notions as self-contained units of meaning. It takes place as discourse whereby meanings are negotiated through interaction. He also claims that the notional syllabus deals with the components of discourse, not with discourse itself. As such it is not centred on the language user.

If the approach is communicative, then it is discourse which must be the centre of attention. Factors such as cohesion, coherence, interaction, propositions and elocutionary functions must be taken into account.

Other criticism comes from O'Neill (1977:8,11) who comments that one cannot judge materials or a lesson through reference to narrow functional/notional criteria alone. An approach based solely upon such criteria is likely ultimately to be sterile.

He also points out that it is very unlikely that many learners will ever be aware of their needs in the terms of Dr J.A. Van Ek's **The Threshold level** (Council of Europe 1975). He thinks it is both fruitless and unnecessary to try to specify everything that is done in such terms. A model such as Dr Van Ek's is a good basis for a model of what a learner should eventually learn to do with the language, but it can never specify the exact needs. These needs will vary from learner to learner. O'Neill stresses that one cannot teach people to communicate in a foreign language if one becomes obsessed with doing everything that one does with specific, clearly-defined functions and purposes in mind.

From the above discussion, it becomes obvious that the functional approach holds great promise, but its implementation must be intelligently planned.

3.8 Communicative syllabuses for African languages

In January 1982, the Cape Education Department introduced a new syllabus for the teaching of Xhosa. This syllabus replaced the old structurally oriented one which had been in operation since 1975.

The syllabus aims at focusing on a more functional and practical approach, presenting Xhosa in the form of everyday situations, language notions and functions. It is based on the communicative language teaching approach.

As is expected of a syllabus, this one specifies content. It refers to the specific body of knowledge that has to be acquired in order to attain certain educational aims. This implies that instruction i.e. methodology does not form part of the syllabus.

The syllabus distinguishes between the Higher Grade and Standard Grade. The core syllabus is intended as a common basis for both Higher and Standard Grade levels. The core syllabus does not, however, distinguish between Higher and Standard Grades in its exposition of aims and objectives. The same subject matter is prescribed for LISTENING, SPEAKING, WRITING and READING. Differentiation between the two occurs only with regard to the examination which provides for a choice between books in the answering of questions on prescribed literature.

Nevertheless the Higher Grade syllabus requires a higher standard than that required for the Standard Grade, i.e. for the Higher Grade greater linguistic perception, a higher level of language proficiency, a more comprehensive vocabulary is required than for the Standard Grade.

In the Education Gazette (4 February 1982:63) the syllabus for Xhosa as a third language for the Senior Secondary Course states the following under its aims and objectives:

> It is attempted to co-ordinate the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) of pupils so that they will be in a position to use the communicative means concerned in everyday situations and therefore, be able to appreciate the value of Xhosa in various community roles in our multilingual country.
>
> The main objectives are to master the various categories of language usage i.e. the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, to such a degree that they coincide with the purposes of the expositions of the examination requirements and syllabus content for Xhosa.

As far as listening and speaking skills (oral programme) are concerned, the aim is to develop the listening and speaking skills of the pupils in respect of various everyday themes (and their vocabulary) that occur in specific contact situations.

Functions and notions within specific situations are the principal organising factors. The syllabus inventory has been adopted from the Council of Europe Studies (Van Ek 1975). However, Council of Europe Studies focused upon the social and vocational or academic needs of adult learners of foreign languages.

It seems that the Xhosa syllabus inventory was meant for a different target group and for a different purpose.

A communicative syllabus should stress short-term instrumental objectives. It should aim at enabling the learner to do something with the language. Objectives have to be stated as clearly as possible, indicating what a learner should be able to do under what circumstances. (Yalden 1983:22).

Widdowson (1978:67) correctly points out that if the ultimate aim is communicative competence, then the components of communication must be specified. The following components are suggested by Canale and Swain (1980): grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse and strategic competence. Such a specification will ensure that all these components are taken account of in the course.

Another serious criticism is that the aim and objectives in the Xhosa syllabus are very vague. Non-explicit verbs have been used in formulating these objectives. The format, content, and its scoring criteria of any test should reflect its objectives.

In the case of a communicative language-teaching approach, these objectives should be expressed in terms of what the pupil will be able to do in the target language in a natural linguistic situation; i.e., whether he or she will be able to use the language effectively for a given communicative purpose. Wesche (1983:45) stresses that "we are not talking about behavioral objectives in the sense that they have sometimes been understood in second-language programs".

The first step in determining such objectives is to describe the learner/examinee's second-language needs. Such needs may be formulated in terms of the circumstances in which the target language will be used, if possible in terms of communicative acts (e.g. read the sports pages of the newspaper; take an office telephone message). The problem then is to specify the nature of these acts as precisely as possible and to break them into teachable units.

Wesche outlines information which the objectives should clarify for each communicative act:

> the purpose of the interaction (including which topics will be treated, related notions, and the language functions which the learner will need), situational aspects which will influence language behaviour (including the social and psychological roles and relationships of the participants and the settings in which communicative interaction will take place), and the types of discourse which will be appropriate (to genre, variety, visual or auditory channel, for instance). It is also important to determine the degree of skill expected of the learner of examinee. Such definition of objectives will make it possible to determine the language forms (structures, words, and phrases) needed by the

> second-language speaker, or at least to specify the kinds of authentic materials and interactions with native speakers which would expose the learner or examinee to appropriate forms. (1983:45)

The concept of needs analysis is a central issue in communicative syllabus design. Kroes (1984) and Van der Walt (1985) suggest that the starting point of any course aimed at communicative competence is an analysis of the learner's needs. In order to plan a language teaching course, the language functions the learners will have to or will want to perform must be determined. This includes the notions they will have to handle. This can only be done if one has insight into what the communicative needs of the learner are likely to be so the content of the course can be tailored to these needs. Communicative needs are seen as the starting point or basis for any syllabus aimed at communicative competence. Because learner-centredness is the guiding principle on which the communicative syllabus is based, the choice of language to be learnt should be made by the learner as far as possible. Selection from the components of the syllabus will thus be made in terms of the learner, in terms of relevance to his communicative purposes.

On looking at `situations' chosen for this syllabus it is doubtful whether the above concept has been taken into account. In fact, what are termed `situations', are in fact topics. Consider the following `situations':

- communication
- Ciskei and Transkei
- South Africa
- religion
- finance

These `situations' are general and not meaningful. If learners were allowed to select their own `situation', one could not guarantee that any of the above `situations' would have been chosen.

After covering the language used in the above `situations', leaners may not see any visible progress. They may not be able to do things in Xhosa which they could not do previously. Morrow (1982) warns that the most soul-destroying approach to teaching or learning a foreign language is to do it merely because it is timetabled, without any attempt to relate it to some goal. This situation should be avoided.

Other additional items, such as settings and roles, do not feature at all in the 1982 Xhosa syllabus.

However, this is a first attempt (and a good one at that) to develop a Xhosa syllabus based on the communicative approach. It is hoped that improvements will soon be effected.

A wide range of communicative syllabus types has been devised since the Council of Europe began its work. Yalden (1983:120, 131) points out, however, that it seems most unlikely that any one of the models proposed would be universally accepted. The emergence of a universal type of input syllabus is no more likely now than the emergence of a universal method of second language instruction. Clearly one can no longer talk in terms of `the' syllabus or `the' method.

The whole procedure of communicative syllabus design is still in an early stage, but the model of syllabus design has become a dynamic, not a static one. It allows for constant feedback from a variety of points into the area of syllabus type and selection content as well as into areas such as teaching procedures.

Another syllabus which may be mentioned is the syllabus for Nguni languages in Transvaal schools. This syllabus is based on the following principle: "...(dat) 'n taal funksioneel aangebied en aangeleer behoort te word, dit wil sê die onderrig moet gerig wees op die effektiewe gebruik van die taal" (1981:1).

Regarding frequency, the syllabus states: "Om sinvolle vordering in die onderrig te verseker, sal daar begin moet word met die gebruikseenhede (sinstrukture) wat die hoogste gebruiksfrekwensie in die omgangstaal het" (1981:1).

The aims of the syllabus are as follows:

a) Algemene doelstellings

Daar word beoog om by die leerling taalvaardighede (begrypend luister, praat, lees en skryf) te koördineer en te bevorder sodat hy:

- in staat sal wees om die Bantoetaal as kommunikasiemedium te gebruik;
- die waarde van die Bantoetaal as kultuurdraer sal besef en sal wil benut;

- insig sal verkry in die struktuur van 'n nie-Europese taal;

- 'n bydrae sal kan lewer tot beter volkereverhoudings, begrip en agting vir die ander kultuur.

b) Besondere doelstellings

- begrip en beheersing van die taal

- praatvaardigheid

- leesvaardigheid

- skryfvaardigheid vas te lê en uit te bou. (1981:2).

The approach used is described as follows:

a) Praatvaardigheid
- die inskerping van woordeskat en strukture;
- die stel en beantwoording van vrae, ook oor gelese gedeeltes;
- koorpraat;
- luisteroefeninge;
- die vertel/oorvertel/vertolking van verhaaltjies/anekdotes in die taal;
- samesprake/dialoë/monoloë.

b) Die skryfprogram

Die skryfprogram behels

- die opbou van 'n woordeskat; dit is van primere belang, want die Afrikatale toon geen ooreenkoms met Europese tale nie. (Woordeskat word mondeling aangeleer, maar skriftelik in sinsverband vasgele);

- dat alle skriftelike werk in verband met sinstrukture, die skakelstelsel, ensovoorts, vooraf eers deur mondelinge oefeninge voorberei moet word;

- dat selfstandige stelwerk in die vorm van sinnetjies en paragrawe (nie opstelle nie) dikwels aandag kry;

- dat skriftelike oefeninge tydrowend kan wees en daarom deeglik beplan moet word en beperk moet word tot verteenwoordigende voorbeelde ter vaslegging van die behandelde werk.

c) Praat en skryf (taalstudie as hulpmiddel by die praat- en skryfprogram)

Die aanleer van die lewende taal is primer. Dit sal 'n begrip van sekere taalverskynsels noodsaaklik maak, met die voorbehoud dat die grammatika funksioneel uit die teikentaal onderrig word en nie die taal uit die grammatika nie. Sien Taalkundeprogram Bylaag A. Diepraatprogram (inskerping en gebruik van sinstrukture) word noodwendig gevolg deur logiese sistematisering en klassifisering.

d) Hulpmiddels

Van die volgende kan nuttig gebruik gemaak word:

tekening, aksieprente, taalkaarte, woordeskatkaartjies, bandmasjine, truprojektor, klankskyfieprojektor, taallaboratorium, plaatopnames, handboeke, ensovoorts.

e) Evaluering

Evaluering behoort in ooreenstemming met en in die gees van die doelstellings van hierdie sillabus te geskied (1981:2.3).

Yalden (1983:86) gives a list of components of a communicative syllabus. Within current theories of how the language teaching operation should proceed, a consideration of most, if not all, of these components listed is viewed as being necessary. These components are the following:

- as detailed a consideration as possible of the purposes for which the learners wish to acquire the target language

- some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target language (physical aspects need to be considered, as well as social setting)

- the socially defined role the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the roles of their interlocutors

- the communicative events in which the learners will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on

- the language functions involved in these events, or what the learner will need to be able to do with or through the language

- the notions involved, or what the learner will need to be able to talk about

- the skills involved in the `knitting together' of discourse: discourse and rhetorical skills

- the variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed, and the levels in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach

- the grammatical content that will be needed
- the lexical content that will be needed.

Harlow (1980) points out that the principal organising factors of the communicative syllabus are the function and the notion.

In the Nguni syllabus only one component, purposes, has been specified. Although it is stated that the syllabus is based on a principle of functional presentation this syllabus can be said to be communicative in name only. It can be described only as a document containing a statement of intent. It does not conform to the specifications of a communicative syllabus.

3.9 Advantages of the communicative approach

The advantages of the communicative approach are largely implied in what has already been said in this discussion.

In the first place the language teacher is forced to consider the communicative value of everything that is taught. He does not teach something simply because it is there. The language teacher does it to increase the learner's communicative capacity. Also, he does it in a way that is directly relevant to the learner's interests in learning the language. The

teacher has the means to describe the communicative needs of different types of language learner, whether these needs are of a general type or more specialised character (Wilkins 1975:179).

Another advantage is that language ability that is developed through the communicative approach enables the learner to communicate meaningfully. It does not stop at grammatical competence, as grammar-based courses do, so that the learner knows the structure of the target language but cannot express himself.

From the learner's point of view the advantage is that he can see from the beginning how the things that he is learning relate to the need that he has or will have for the language when he is obliged to communicate through it. His satisfaction will be the greater because he will be able to experience the practical benefit of what he is doing. In any case, if sometimes he does not use the language from the early stages of his learning experience, he is much more likely to achieve successful communication than would be the case with a grammatical approach, where the benefits are mostly long-term. The learner's motivation therefore is likely to be much more readily sustained.

A further advantage of this approach would stem from the fact that the labels used in asking the learner to use the language would not be unfamiliar to the language learner himself. Much of the language used to specify the content is of an everyday kind. It is relatively non-technical. When asked whether he wants to learn to request information, to apologise, to express gratitude in the target language, he will find it much easier to arrive at an answer than if he is asked to identify his own learning objectives and to select for himself what is relevant. This suggests a degree of freedom for the learner that language courses have rarely, if ever, offered, declares Wilkins (1975:34).

Van der Walt (1979:39) observes that it is very difficult to design a notional syllabus which contains both functional and conceptual categories and to contextualise the presentation in an economical way. One cannot but disagree with Van der Walt. The Xhosa syllabus for senior secondary schools proves him wrong. In this syllabus one finds an inventory of functions , notions and language items. A context is provided for the specified functions and notions. This has been done in an economical way by illustrating ways in which these may be used.

Perhaps Lee (1977:248) arrives at the heart of the matter when he advises that structural, situational and notional syllabuses should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but should be regarded as pre-syllabuses which can be drawn upon to design a specific syllabus for a specific group.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERLYING CONCEPTS AND CURRENT ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TESTING

4.1 Introduction

The testing of second language proficiency tends to follow teaching methodologies (Davies 1968). Since the turn of the century, in testing as in teaching, there have been swift changes from one approach to another. One strongly recommended method has succeeded another, with proponents of each denouncing the validity of all preceding methods. Farhady (1983:254) mentions that different divisions in testing have evolved from the influence of different teaching methodologies i.e. new developments in language teaching have, rightly or wrongly, resulted in different testing approaches. Following this line of argument, one could describe discrete-point testing as having been developed from discrete-point type teaching methods such as the audiolingual approach. Similarly, integrative tests have been developed under the influence of cognitively based teaching approaches.

4.2 Development of language testing

Language testing can be divided into three major historical trends. Spolsky (1978b) refers to these as prescientific, (roughly prior to the early 1950s) psychometric-structuralist (early 1950s to the late 1960s) and integrative-sociolinguistic (late 1960s, and onwards). The trends followed in order but overlapped in time and approach. The third picked up many elements from the first, and co-exists and competes with the second.

The prescientific approach stemmed from the old grammar translation method, in which little attention was paid to the statistical characteristics of the test. Students were given a passage and were simply required to translate it either into or from the target language. During the prescientific period, there was, in general, little concern about or attention paid to the reliability, validity, or other important psychometric characteristics of testing activities carried out in the course of natural language instruction. Clark (1983:422) says it was assumed that any individual who was qualified to teach a language was, by the same token, fully competent to handle its assessment.

The testing approaches utilised during this period would not for the most part measure validly the student's ability to make use of the language as a means of functional communication in real-life situations outside the classroom setting.

Under the influence of the audiolingual method and structural linguists, teaching and testing procedures were fundamentally modified, ushering in what is called the psychometric-structuralist period. The theory of language testing developed by Lado and his followers assumed that language is a system of habits which involves matters of form, meaning and distribution at several levels of structure, i.e. the sentence, clause, phrase, word, morpheme, and phoneme, (Farhady 1983:312). The cooperation of behavioural psychologists and structural linguists led to the development of precise and objective language tests with reasonably sound statistical attributes. This type of testing, which swept most educational fields including English language testing, was later referred to as the discrete-point approach.

Oller (1979:37) defines the discrete point test as follows:

> ...discrete test is one that attempts to focus attention on one point of grammar at a time. Each test item is aimed at one and only one element of a particular component of a grammar ... such as phonology, syntax or vocabulary.

Clark (1983) contends that by its very nature the discrete-point, one-element-per-item testing procedure is not capable of measuring the student's ability to comprehend or produce, on an integrated basis, a larger and more natural corpus of language material than that presented by individual-element test questions.

Testing selected terms can only give an assessment of the surface behaviour or performance. Trengove (1976) feels that what is needed is some form of test to identify and measure those variables which lie underneath and constitute the bulk of communicative competence.

The general problem with Lado's approach is that it collapses like a house of cards (Morrow 1979:145) as soon as the linguistic foundation (structural linguistics) on which it is constructed is attacked. Even if one adopts for the moment a purely grammatical view of what it is to know a language (compare Chomsky's definition in terms of the ability to formulate all and only the grammatical sentences in a language), then it seems fairly clear that a vital stage is missing, the ability to synthesise (compare also Wilkins 1976 and Bartz 1979).

Morrow is convinced that knowledge of the elements of a language counts for nothing unless the user is able to combine them in new and appropriate ways to meet the linguistic demands of the situation in which he wishes to use the language. This appears to have a bearing on the learning of Xhosa as L3. It seems that non-Xhosa graduates who have majored in Xhosa are competent in it but may be unable to perform in some situations.

The student's responses need to be assessed not quantitatively, but qualitatively. Tests should be designed to reveal not simply the number of items which are answered correctly, but also to reveal the quality of the student's language performance.

The evaluation of a student's ability to produce discrete oral features correctly does not necessarily give the best indication of his ability to use the foreign language for the purpose of communication. The evidence in the literature on testing language proficiency points to the need for going beyond the testing of discrete oral features (compare Bartz 1979).

One may conclude that whatever discrete-point tests do, they do not assess communicative competence. A response to single sentence items, where no further linguistic context is given, not even non-verbal clues as to the setting, cannot predict language behaviour involving natural acts of communication (see Davies 1978 and also Farhady 1983).

Despite criticism levelled at discrete-point testing, Canale and Swain (1980:34) present a case for this type of test in some circumstances. They state that although it has been argued that integrative type tests must be used to measure communicative competence, it seems that discrete-point tests will also be useful in their proposed communicative approach. This is because such tests may be more effective than integrative tests in making the learner aware of the separate components and elements of communicative competence and in assessing the learner's control of these.

Some scholars are even doubtful about the existence of differences between the discrete-point and integrative tests. Farhady (1983) presents evidence of underlying similarities between these two types of tests. He does this by comparing statistically the two types of tests regarding the correlation coefficients reported in literature. Farhady concludes that the evidence presented seems to support the hypothesis that there is virtually no difference between discrete-point and integrative tests as far as what they measure or their results are concerned. Nevertheless, there are many cases in which these two statistically almost identical tests yield very different outcomes which, if not taken into account, may have serious consequences for both administrators and students of English as a second language.

From the above discussion, one may conclude that the distinction between discrete-point and integrative tests is a continuum along which tests of communicative competence and tests of actual communicative performance may be arranged.

4.3 Integrative-sociolinguistic testing

In the early sixties, Carrol (1961) already began to have second thoughts on the theoretical advantages of the Lado approach which he had praised highly in a review in 1953 (see Carrol 1953, commenting on Lado's doctoral thesis). The competing trend that Spolsky calls `integrative-sociolinguistic' was introduced by Carrol in the very year that Lado's authoritative book on the `discrete-point' method appeared. This third trend immediately challenged the claim that foreign or second language proficiency tests ought to be based on contrastive analysis (Oller 1976:143).

During this period, the theoretical orientation adopted for testing reflected in large part a growing dissatisfaction with structural linguistic theory as a proper model for language analysis and, by the same token, pedagogical practice. Contemporary linguistic research held that the use of language for real-life communication involved a creative act in which the whole of the communicative event was considerably greater than the sum of its linguistic elements. As a result, the effectiveness of the communication could not be adequately assessed through individual evaluation of its component parts.

Assessment procedures deriving from the new linguistic orientation, and which undertook to determine the student's ability to carry out more globally-oriented language-use tasks extending beyond individual-element performance, came to be referred to as "integrative" techniques, a term also derived from Carrol, (Clark 1983:432). Oller was among the first and most ardent proponents of integratively-oriented testing procedures.

Oller (1976) observes that the integrative sociolinguistic trend offers a strikingly different set of assumptions. As early as 1968, Spolsky was talking about the assessment of `overall language proficiency' as if it were possible to tap an underlying general language competence that might be common to all of the various modalities of language use and learning. At the same time a great many research studies that compared the performance of global testing techniques against discrete-point techniques began to appear quite independently in numerous parts of the world. There were studies using the cloze procedure to measure both listening and reading comprehension in places as widely separated as California and Papua New Guinea (Oller 1976:144). Experiments with dictation as a global language testing procedure appeared in the United States and Sweden.

Oller argues that a consistent though not unanimous finding is that integrative tests requiring diverse modes of language processing intercorrelate at remarkably high levels in two important ways. First, they are statistically intercorrelated. Second, error analysis reveals a high degree of correspondence between the structures generated in widely different tasks, for instance, translations and spontaneous speech.

Three separate arguments are used to support the general non-discrete approach to language testing.

The first is that language is not a set of unrelated items, that it forms a whole and that the items must be integrated and tested in combination with one another. The second is that language learning is purposeful, that the purpose is always communicative and that what must be tested is communicative ability and not formal knowledge. The third is that discrete-point language tests are too general to be of value and that specific tests are required (Davies 1978:215).

Oller, quoted in Davies, puts forward a very strong argument in favour of integrative tests. His argument is expressed in the terms of his own speculations about a grammar of expectancy (Oller 1972), his term for the notion that prediction is the central element in language performance. A test which captures that prediction is likely to be more valid than one that does not. Oller's argument, then, is about validity, that integrative tests are more valid than discrete-point tests.

Whereas discrete items attempt to test knowledge of a language one bit at a time, integrative tests attempt to assess a learner's capacity to use many items all at the same time, and possibly while exercising several presumed components of a grammatical system, and perhaps more than one of the traditionally recognised skills or aspects of skills.

Examples of integrative tests are dictation (spoken input is processed for content and structure, then written down); cloze tests (the input is written material which is read, gaps being completed with written elements); free writing (the examinee has to structure his own content and formulate it in a grammatically and semantically appropriate form) and oral interviews.

The above discussion confirms that if communicative competence is taught, that is what should be tested. When testing communicative competence, the test tasks should be natural acts of communication. This seems to rule out discrete-point tests as indicators of

communicative competence. However, this does not mean that there is no place for discrete-point tests in the assessment of linguistic competence.

4.4 Language testing research

It is possible to focus language testing research on at least three different but closely interrelated areas of interest (Oller 1976). First, language tests may be examined in their capacity as tests. Second, learner characteristics may be investigated using language tests as elicitation devices. Third, attention may be focused on hypotheses about various psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic constraints on verbal sequences using language tests as research tools. It is important to note that focusing on one area does not mean that one can forget about the other two. When the focus is on tests, researchers pose questions about validity, reliability, practicality and possibly also the instructional value of the tests themselves.

The instructional value of the test will depend on how readily it can be treated as an integral and functional part of an instructional programme in teaching a foreign language in a classroom situation, teaching communication skills, or verbally imparting subject matter in a monolingual or multilingual school programme, for instance.

Another approach to language testing research may be to concentrate on learner characteristics and on the nature of the learner's internalised grammar. An examinee's total score on a test may then be viewed as a kind of summary statistic of his skill ranging over all the responses on the test. If the test has an acceptable level of validity according to some set of criteria, the total score may be taken as an index of the examinee's ability to participate in the sort of speech act(s) represented in the test. In other words, instead of just looking at the total score, it is possible to diagnose learner characteristics in finer detail. Also, groups may be compared on the basis of summary statistics, such as average scores or they may be compared by more finely grained interlanguage analyses. They may also provide the basis for operationally defining stages of acquisition and such notions as native language competence. Given such definitions, it should be possible to define the skill of a particular language learner on some operationally defined scale of language competence. If language testing research focuses on the learner, it can help clarify the relationship between first and second language research (Oller 1976:146). In the present study, this approach has been followed. Pupils were presented with an achievement test based on the syllabus. Their scores were taken as an index of their ability to communicate in the types of speech acts represented in the test.

A third possible focus of language testing research is the test material itself as a speech act or series of them. For instance, it is possible to focus attention on the constraints of a particular phonological (or graphological) sequence, syllable structure, lexical item type, phrase type, clause type, sentence type or discourse type. Usually a study with this focus in mind is seen as general psycholinguistic research - which it is (Oller 1976). Nonetheless, the findings of such research are crucial to understanding the nature of language tests and their properties as grammatically constrained materials.

4.5 Language proficiency

It is generally agreed that language proficiency is composed of underlying abilities, knowledge of systems and skills (compare Hymes 1972, Oller 1979 and Chomsky 1980). However, there is less agreement on the content and boundaries of this underlying competence and hence on what language proficiency tests should, and do measure.

Based on his theoretical framework of an integrative theory of communicative competence (see Canale and Swain 1980) Canale (1983:339) proposes the following dimensions of language proficiency:

> Basic language proficiency is concerned with the biological universals required for any language development and use. Of concern then are not only universals of grammar that underlie grammatical competence (compare Chomsky 1975, 1980) but also sociolinguistic universals, discourse universals, strategic universals and perceptual/processing universals.

The potential value of such an enriched notion of basic language proficiency is evident when diagnosis of language disorders is done. This diagnosis will include not only a wide variety of aspects of language use but also more universal and superficial language-specific features.

Communicative language proficiency focuses on social, interpersonal uses of language through spoken or written channels. One may assume with Morrow (1977) and Canale (1983) that communication is primarily a form of social interaction in which emphasis is normally placed less on grammatical forms and literal meaning than on participants and

their purposes in using language - i.e. on the social meaning of utterances. Such social meaning is qualified by contextual variables such as the role of participants, setting, purpose and norms of interaction.

Although communication normally involves grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competencies (Canale and Swain 1980), the focus is thought to be primarily on sociolinguistic knowledge and skills. As such, the degree of exposure to and use of sociolinguistic rules may be especially important in determining the range of communicative functions and situations that an individual can handle and is willing to handle.

Autonomous language proficiency involves proficiency in less directly social, more intrapersonal uses of language such as problem solving, monitoring one's thoughts, verbal play, poetry or creative writing. Focus is less on social meaning than on grammatical forms and literal meaning; hence contextual variables do not serve to qualify (simplify or complicate) information as much as do the language code and logical relationships among propositions. The main language competence involved would seem to be grammatical (especially vocabulary and rules of sentence formation and literal meaning).

These three dimensions of language proficiency are, of course, related. Basic language proficiency comprises those language-related universals that are required for communicative and autonomous language uses. However, such universals constitute only the upper limits - and hence only a part - of these other dimensions. The remainder of an individual's communicative and autonomous proficiencies is presumably the result of socialisation and, to a relatively minor extent, individual differences in personality, intelligence, learning style, motivation and the like. Communicative and autonomous proficiencies seem to differ in that sociolinguistic competence receives emphasis in communicative language uses whereas grammatical competence may be more evident in autonomous uses. On these views it follows that one cannot adequately develop or test communicative proficiency through autonomous tasks or vice versa (Canale 1983).

Several writers, for example Morrow (1979), Farhady (1983), Askes (1984) and Lewis (undated), point out that language testing does not seem to have kept pace with changing views of language teaching. Farhady (1983:253) believes that neither discrete-point nor integrative tests enable us to assess the communicative/functional ability of the language learner. He maintains that such tests may not provide a complete picture of an examinee's total language proficiency. This failure could be one of the many reasons for the emergence of new testing approaches. Farhady proposes the necessity of a new dimension in language

testing. He points out that, because of the complexity of the functional process and diversity of functional categories, no real progress has been made in developing functional tests. The necessity for such tests has been proposed by Morrow (1977) and some useful guidelines have been provided by Canale and Swain (1978, 1980). Nevertheless, the practical development of functional tests has not yet been accomplished. It has also been difficult to give an appropriate definition of a proficiency test.

Clark (1975:411) defines a proficiency test as `any measurement procedure aimed at determining the examinee's ability to receive or transmit information in the test language for some pragmatically useful purpose within a real-life setting.' For a refined definition of a proficiency test see also Rea, (1978), Morrow (1979) and Carrol (1980).

Communicative testing can be viewed as the response to recent changes of emphasis in language teaching where importance is attached to communication rather than to formal accuracy and to purpose-specific rather than general language.

Most language tests have traditionally emphasised accuracy (usage) rather than practical effectiveness (use) and general rather than specific skills. As such, they have not adequately reflected most learners' assessment needs. The distinction between **usage** and **use** is of great importance for teaching and testing. It implies that a test cannot be based on a selection of items chosen on linguistic grounds alone. To devise an effective test, it is necessary to specify how a test requires to use the language. The criterion for success lies not in formal correctness but in communicative effectiveness (Carrol 1980:7, Wesche 1983:47).

4.6 Proficiency tests and achievement tests

Proficiency tests have the following characteristics:

- they measure real-life competence
- the frame of reference is the actual situation in which the language is used
- they emphasise the viewpoint that languages are learnt for a purpose - to be used.

An achievement test on the other hand has the following properties:

- it assesses what has been achieved
- it tests either by discrete-point testing or integratively
- it indicates how much of a syllabus has been learnt.

Although oral proficiency testing seems to have received the lion's share of the attention, oral achievement testing should not be left unattended. It is generally the most common type of testing being done in foreign language classrooms, yet there has been comparatively little improvement and no further development of oral achievement tests. For this study, an achievement test was designed. This test aimed to measure the oral proficiency of Senior Certificate pupils following the Cape Department of Education Syllabus. It was both integrative and functional in that it measured various aspects of the language namely grammar, functions and notions. Also, more than one skill was measured - listening, comprehension and speaking.

4.7 Test requirements

The use of authentic language should always be an important aspect of any discussion on language testing. A full application of the principle of authenticity would mean that all the tests undertaken should be real-life interactive communicative operations.

The use of a communicative situation not only provides a setting in which the student can perform, but also enhances the credibility and relevance that students view as lacking in many abstract components of language learning. The real world of communication is not very clear to many students. The testing of oral communication in the classroom can help to promote an understanding of this relationship. Tests that simulate real situations can provide a better understanding of what the ultimate tasks in language performance will be.

All testing strategies consequently have to be in a meaningful context. Real contexts are illusory in a pedagogical setting but certainly a constant realistic setting can be maintained. If one wants to test grammar, one can select situations where certain grammatical events necessarily occur eg. reporting for past tense, briefing for future tense.

Content validity refers to the ability of a test to measure what has been taught and subsequently learnt by the students (see Clark 1975:11, Valdman 1979:557). Teachers must make sure that the test contains items that correlate with the content of instruction. It follows that unless students are given practice in oral communication in the foreign language classroom, evaluation of communication may not be valid. Therefore a test, to be valid, must activate the internalised rule systems by which discourse is meaningfully processed, including those sociolinguistic variables which influence language behaviour. Such tests should involve the use of natural language in both a verbal and situational context.

Reliability refers to the dependability of the tests - is it a consistent measuring device? Valdman (1979) refers to two types of reliability:

- reliability of the test, i.e. is the test itself constructed in such a way as to yield consistent results

- reliability of scoring, i.e. is consistency of results facilitated by the nature of the scoring process.

Any activity that purports to be a test must involve a scoring procedure. In scoring a test that claims to measure a student's ability to communicate, discrete errors cannot be the primary criterion by which success (or lack of it) is calculated. Instead the criteria must be based on the student's ability to produce or comprehend a message in the foreign language. This will involve a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of the tester.

It is difficult to separate the two criteria totally as the linguistic quality of an utterance can influence comprehensibility, the basic communicative criterion.

While a major goal of most language programmes is communication ability in the target language, there is a justifiable concern about linguistic correctness because these programmes are not just an attempt to teach survival communication, but also an attempt to teach literacy in another language.

4.8 Characteristics of communicative tests

The label communicative is used so often nowadays in connection with language learning materials that it is in danger of being taken for granted (Harrison 1983:77). This applies to assessment material, too. However, it ought to be possible to look for particular characteristics when trying to distinguish the real thing from imitations. Harrison (1983:77) lists the following criteria:

- A communicative test should assess language used for a purpose beyond itself. An oral interview for example can be used to assess how well the learner can manipulate language in response to stereotyped questions, but a communicative version demands a response to circumstance. This rules out tests in which the learner is asked to display his language competence for no other reason than to have it assessed.

- A communicative test should depend on the bridging of an information gap. It has to propose a language-using purpose which can be fulfilled by the communicative skill so far acquired by the learner. He must **need** to know or to tell. His interlocutor must be in a similar necessity of explaining or finding out. For example, one kind of role play may consist of reading out the alternative parts in a script; another could be planning a holiday on the basis of travel brochures. The former has no intrinsic value as a communication: the latter necessarily involves expression of information by one part to the exchange and understanding of it by the other.

- A communicative test should represent an event. The situation at the end of it should be different from what it was at the beginning. This means that there has to be some sequence within the test. It may require a simple transition from not knowing (e.g. understanding a text, whether written or spoken). A more complex transition would be from the data given in one form to a conclusion reached in another, by way of several intermediary stages. The sequence in this case could be building on several kinds of information supplied to one person, as in taking a phone message, looking something up in a reference book and leaving a written note. In this kind of exchange some personal commitment has to be made by the learner to the outcome of the communication. The participants' real or assumed characters and attitudes will have rubbed off on one another to some extent, however small.

A test type does not become communicative by mixing in a `dash of reality' (Harrison 1983:79). It is communicative because of the use made of it. If it cannot be used to represent a communicative purpose, it cannot be a communicative test. The answer to the question whether it is communicative depends on the circumstances and the ability of the test technique to fit them. The communicative test is concerned both with functional learning and with the application by the student of what he has learnt to use outside language itself. Harrison (1983) stresses that this implies that the communicative test is largely a proficiency test - but not entirely, since there must also be elements of achievement in it if it relates to the course which precedes it. This interplay between learning, the assessment and the real (even if only simulated) applications, is an essential element in communicative testing.

One could argue that the infinite number of functional patterns to be tested may create problems similar to those of discrete-point tests. Farhady (1983:258) points out however that there is an extremely important difference between the two types of seemingly similar

problems. In the functional test, any single item involves an independent communicative behaviour regardless of the number and type of linguistic rules. No matter what the function, there is no need to investigate whether (or how much) it contributes to the process of communication. This is not true for discrete-point test items because they involve discrete rules with no specific reference to the actual or potential use of those rules in real communication.

A testing approach which attempts to follow the notional-functional approach should include items which focus on assessing the examinees' ability to handle the communicative functions of language rather than their ability to use linguistic forms only. This does not imply that the linguistic accuracy of a sentence is de-emphasised. On the contrary, it is considered as important as any other component of the behaviour (Wilkins 1976:65).

It seems that in the notional-functional approach a socially appropriate and linguistically accurate response will be ranked higher than an utterance lacking either of these aspects. As to the nature of the functional test, Wilkins (1976) believes that it should basically involve integrated rather than isolated skills. He states that a functional test should seek answers to such questions as the examinees' ability to perform certain functions in appropriate social environments. In developing a functional test then, selection of the functions and notions is of importance.

A functional test has several advantages over the other tests. First, its development is based on principles of a well-known theory which makes the purpose of the test clear. It means that the content validity of such a test is almost automatically guaranteed because what is required to be measured is known exactly, before developing the test. Second, unlike the other tests, responses to test items are not based on the intuition of one or few individual test developers; what seems appropriate for a test developer may not be appropriate for the majority of native speakers. A functional test could serve several purposes including placement, criterion-related, proficiency, and diagnostic measurement, (Farhady 1983). The functional test incorporates contextualisation, the most praised characteristic of integrative tests, and item independence, the obvious advantage of discrete-point tests, into one testing approach. In the functional test, then, the items are independent of one another and pointedly contextualised, which seems ideal for a language proficiency test, (Farhady 1983).

4.9 Direct and indirect proficiency testing.

In direct proficiency testing, the testing format and procedure attempt to duplicate as closely as possible the setting and operation of the real-life situations in which the proficiency is normally demonstrated (Clark 1975:10).

A direct test of oral proficiency, in the face-to-face communication sense, would involve a test setting in which the examinee and one or more human interlocutors do in fact engage in communicative dialogue.

A major requirement of direct proficiency tests is that they must provide a very close facsimile or work sample of the real-life language situations in question, with respect to both the setting and operation of the tests and the linguistic areas and content which they embody.

One of the constraints of direct testing is that the examiner in his or her role as test administrator cannot usually provide the detailed and audible role-related cues that are present in the genuine communicative setting. Both participants know perfectly well that it is a test and not a tea party, and therefore both are subject to psychological tension. This results in linguistic constraints of style and register thought to be appropriate to the occasion by both participants (Clark 1975:20).

This psychological tension was great when this researcher administered a direct Xhosa language test to white pupils. It appeared that most of the pupils had never experienced a face-to-face interview with a black interlocutor in a school setting. The fact that the pupils were exposed to a mother-tongue accent for the first time in a teacher-pupil testing setting, also made them nervous.

Indirect proficiency tests, on the other hand, do not require the establishment of a highly face-valid and representative testing situation. Clark (1975:11) explains that in the speaking area, a test which is defined here as indirect may require the student to describe printed pictures aloud or in some other way produce intelligible spoken responses. However, since such testing procedures are not truly reflective of a real-life dialogue situation, they are considered indirect rather than direct measures of oral proficiency.

4.10 Available testing procedures

One of the well-known and most frequently used tests is the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Oral Interview. The FSI interview was originally developed within that agency. It was used as a means to determine the extent to which graduates of the language training programme would be able to function in a linguistically appropriate and effective manner in the particular language situations they could be expected to encounter in carrying out their various assignments abroad. It was decided to make use of direct conversation with a native speaker as the basic testing procedure. Use of the FSI interview technique up until the early 1970s was largely concentrated within the Foreign Service Institute and certain other government agencies. However, during the early and mid seventies, the FSI interview was increasingly used.

The remarkable accomplishment of the FSI interview is attributed to many factors: tight organisation, quality control, classes which aim to achieve the test's objectives, continuous feedback from the field, and, most of all, ambitious, motivated, articulate students (Young 1980:64).

In its present form the FSI interview takes 20 to 40 minutes to complete and requires two people to administer it: an interviewer and an examiner. Wide application in general of this format would require radical adjustments in teaching staff at all institutions, and in a time of economic stringencies such adjustments are unlikely to occur.

Although the FSI interview remains the best established test of oral proficiency, Frink (1982:282) points out that it is not necessarily the most readily applicable to high school and college students, even with a modified rating scale. Frink (1982:282) argues that it is based on the premise that the person being interviewed is an adult who will work abroad and assesses ability to function professionally in the target language. Many high school and college students are not yet equipped with any professional vocabulary or with the experience and self-assurance to perform professional-level language tests.

A second constraint is the rating scale itself: would any student really be delighted to receive a zero rating? Students prefer to see their efforts evaluated in terms of a letter grade or standard numerical grade. Also, any procedure which necessitates special training for examiners is not likely to become widely used (see also Valdman and Moody 1979 on criticism of the FSI interview).

In the following section, three tests are presented which aim to evaluate second language communication skills. Wesche (1983:48) points out that the first two, developed in Holland and in the United States, are based on Van Ek's specifications of threshold second language objectives for European school children and adults. The third, developed in Britain exemplifies B.J. Carroll's system for test development, and reflects Munby's work on the specification of language needs. Wesche (1983:48-52) describes these tests as follows:

4.10.1 CITO Functional Dialogue Language Tests

> Language tests currently being developed for Dutch secondary school students by CITO (The National Institute for Educational Measurement) illustrate the utilisation of Council of Europe second-language objectives in measures of oral proficiency. A brief description follows:
>
> Format: A cross-indexed set of situational, thematic, and social skills `modules' in the form of written guidelines for dialogues and accompanying illustrations.
>
> Purpose: To test oral communicative ability in the performance of speech acts in the second language (French, German, English). Usable both as classroom exercises and for proficiency assessment.
>
> Clientele: Secondary school students with approximately four years of study in the language (three periods per week).
>
> Specifications: Test objectives conform to overall objectives in the language courses concerned. Three types of target language behaviour have been selected, based on situations, themes, and stereotyped social speech acts. This selection was based on a consideration of what students might need to be able to do in the target language during travel abroad or in encounters with foreign tourists in Holland. Appropriate levels of difficulty were established through pretesting in the schools.

A. Situations: Fifteen situations and subcomponents were specified, along with the roles of participants, the language functions to be performed, and the specific notions needed.

Example

Situation: camping

Sub-component: reception desk

Roles: receptionist, guest

Language functions: asking for information, persuading, etc.

Specific notions: site for a tent, equipment, departure time, etc.

(Other situations are: `in a train compartment',`shopping', `at the police station', etc.).

B. Themes: Twelve themes, with sub themes and language functions were specified.

Example

Theme: personal data

Sub-theme: name, address, age, etc.

Language functions: identifying, qualifying, etc.

(Other themes are: "daily life", "holidays",and various social and political problems).

C. Social speech acts: Seven social speech acts were specified. These include greeting,introducing oneself, thanking, taking one's leave,etc.

Procedures: Draft items were developed by CITOpersonnel, then extensively pretested in the schools and revised.

Test description: Each test consists of guidelines for a dialogue. One role is played by the examiner (teacher) and the other by the examinee. Each dialogue presents ten sequential tasks.

Example

Le Camping

(T) "Le soir, vous arrivez a la reception du camping. La il y a une vieille dame. Saluezla dame." ("In the evening you will arrive at the reception spot. Then you will find an old lady. Greet the lady.")

(E) ("Bonsoir Madame") ("Good evening lady")
(T) "La dame dit `bonsoir'. Puis vous demandez une place a la dame". ("The lady says `Good evening'
Then you ask for a spot from the lady.")
(E) ("Je veux/voudrais camper ici", "une place pour ma tente," etc.) ("I want/would like to camp here, "a spot for my tent", etc.)
Scoring: Scoring is done by the examiner. An experimental grid was developed which produced scores between 1 and 6 on each of the ten tasks on a given test, based on rater judgements of intelligibility, errors and pronunciation. Since inter-rater reliability was low in pretesting, a new scale is currently being developed.

From the given description, one may conclude that these tests are indeed based on principles of communicative testing as outlined earlier on. They are based on a theoretical model of communicative competence. As Wesche (1983:49) has noted, they are interaction-based, pragmatic tests with verbal and situational context. These tests are relatively direct in terms of their purpose to evaluate oral interaction skills. Unpredictable responses are allowed. The tests present varied situations and require a variety of language functions. According to Wesche however, reliability of scoring is as yet uncertain as is the concurrent and predictive validity of the tests; however, both constructive and face validity would appear high. In terms of administration and wide applicability, they are very practical. They also provide a model which can be used by teachers in developing their own tests.

4.10.2 Functional Test for English as a Second Language Students at UCLA

Farhady has recently developed a new approach to communicative test development, based on the Van Ek threshold specifications for adults.

Format: A 64-item multiple choice written test based on common university situations involving foreign students. A situation involving several participants is described. Examininees choose the one response of four which is both grammatically correct and socially appropriate.

Purpose: To test "functional competence" (defined by Farhady as consisting of linguistic and socio-cultural competence) in oral communication. Scores are to be used in the placement of incoming foreign students in ESL courses.

Specifications for test items: Two language functions, each with four subfunctions relevant to an academic environment, were selected from Van Ek's taxonomy (e.g. "finding out and expressing intellectual attitudes"; "getting things done"). The social relations of friend and stranger and equal or unequal status are reflected in items representing all possible combinations of these variables for each subfunction.

Procedures: Situations were composed based on each subfunction. The test was then tried out in open-ended response form with both native and non-native speakers. Their responses provided the correct multiple-choice responses (the preferred native speaker response) and three distractors for each item (chosen from non-native speaker incorrect responses). In each set of responses, one distractor was linguistically correct but socially inappropriate, one was linguistically incorrect but socially appropriate, and one was both incorrect and inappropriate.

Example
Interlocutors: student and professor (unequal status, friend/friend)
Function: getting things done
Subfunction: requesting others to do something
Setting: academic environment
Stimulus: You were applying to a university and needed a letter of recommendation.
You went to a professor, who was also your friend, and said:

Responses:

1. "I'd appreciate it if you could write a letter of recommendation for me". (functional response)
2. "I want to ask you to write a letter of recommendation for me". (linguistic response)
3. "I wonder if you could write a letter recommending to me". (social response)
4. "Hey, give me a recommendation letter".(distractor)

Extensive pretesting was done, first to elicit responses, then to verify native-speaker versus non-native-speaker performance on the multiple choice format.

Scoring: For each item the correct and appropriate response is worth two points, a response which is either correct or appropriate is worth one point, and the response which is neither appropriate nor correct receives no points.

This test has certain very strong qualities, notably its testing of both linguistic accuracy and sociolinguistic appropriacy based on an explicit model of communicative competence.

It also uses authentic (native speaker) responses among the possible answers, and examinees are required to distinguish these from actually occurring non-native responses. It was constructed in accordance with specific communicative objectives. Statistical properties, including concurrent validity and, particularly, reliability, are high.

It is not a direct test, however, of what the speaker would say, but rather an indirect test of his ability to recognise what should be said based on the choices given. Since only sentence-level responses are required to a situation specified in a brief descripton, it is doubtful whether discourse-level competence is tapped, although the test does have some pragmatic qualities in the sense that contextual constraints on language behaviour are important, (Wesche 1983). The test is very practical in administration and scoring, although the development process was laborious.

4.10.3 Royal Society of Arts Examinations in the Communicative Use of English as a Foreign Language

A series of innovative tests based on recent developments in the communicative teaching of foreign languages has been developed by the Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board. The tests are grouped according to "modes" (reading, writing, listening, oral interaction) and difficulty to provide examinations at three proficiency levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced). Advanced examinations include the basic and intermediate tests plus additional tasks. Examinees who wish to establish their second language credentials may choose different combinations of modes and levels, leading to a "profile" of scores.

The tests are based upon detailed specifications of foreign students' language needs in Britain, and represent authentic language tasks as well as texts.

Format: Reading tests include authentic texts from which examinees must extract various kinds of useful information. Listening tests provide tape-recorded texts. The writing tests include tasks such as filling out personal information forms, addressing envelopes, answering letters, and leaving brief messages. The oral tests require the participation of two native speakers, one to participate in a conversation with the examinee, given a simulated situation, and the other to evaluate the examinee's performance. Tasks include such functions as asking for and giving information, requesting help and giving advice.

Purpose: To determine the degree to which foreign students in Britain have the requisite English skills to "operate independently".

Clientele: Individuals over age sixteen for whom English is a second language, who wish to study in Britain.

Specifications: The following are general content areas.

- Social interaction with native and non-native speakers of English.
- Dealing with official and semi-official bodies.
- Shopping and using services.
- Visiting places of interest and entertainment.
- Travelling and arranging for travel.
- Using media for information and entertainment.
- Medical attention and health.
- Studying for academic/occupational/social purposes.

Detailed specifications exist for the degree of skill to be expected in each mode at each level. The criteria used for these specifications in the case of reading tests follow.

Questions set in the tests of reading skills will take into account the following criteria in determining the degree of skill expected of the candidate.

- Size of the text which the candidate can handle.
- Complexity of the text which the candidate can handle.
- Range of language forms which the candidate can handle and comprehension skills which he can use.
- Speed at which texts can be processed and questions answered.
- Flexibility in adopting suitable reading strategies for the task set and adapting to developments in the text.
- Independence from sources of reference.

Examples for reading: "Search through text to locate specific information". "Study text to decide upon an appropriate course of action".

Procedures: Tests were developed and pilot tested in schools and colleges over a period of several years. The preparation of new versions is planned on a continuing basis. Examinations will be administered in a number of testing centres each spring.

Test description: Test tasks are quite varied. Several items from specimen papers for reading and writing are reproduced below.

Example

Basic level reading

You wrote to the Tourist Information Office in Stratford last week, and they have sent this letter, as well as the official guide:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your recent letter enquiring about tourist facilities in the Stratford-upon-Avon area, and asking us to make a hotel reservation for you.

(The letter contains five additional paragraphs, on which a number of questions is based.)

Sample question:

What does the letter tell you?

A. They cannot reserve accommodation for you.

B. They have reserved accommodation for you.

C. You must pay 55 p to reserve accommodation.

Put a cross (x) through the right answer on your answer sheet.

Intermediate level writing

You have to go away tomorrow evening for two days, but you unexpectedly receive this telegram from your friend.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAM
5TXZ/9.56/83 LON
YES THANKS STOP ARRIVING TOMORROW EVENING

Write a short note to your friend to pin on the door. Explain why you are not there and where the keys are.

Scoring: No published information is available on the scoring procedures used with these examinations. Clearly, many of the tasks would require global judgements by trained raters. The criteria used in scoring writing and oral performance include accuracy in the use of these forms, and

> the range of language used by the examinee. Complexity is also a criterion for writing, and flexibility and size are criteria for oral performance (see preceding descriptions).

These tests conform well to communicative testing principles. They set interaction-based, pragmatic, integrative language tasks. The texts presented and the tasks set appear to be authentic, representing ways in which people use language in everyday life. They are examples of direct tests and represent a range of situations and language functions.

Wesche (1983) points out however, that the lengthy procedures involved in the development of these tests are hardly feasible for organisations other than those for whom test development is a major business. Nonetheless the type of tasks and texts used in the tests are very suggestive for persons involved in language testing in any capacity, including teachers.

Wesche maintains that all represent large-scale investments of time and expertise, and envisage a fairly large clientele. A vital component in their development is the specification of objectives based on detailed models of language needs. For information regarding other types of tests see also Madsen (1983). Earlier on, functional tests were discussed. However, Canale and Swain (1980) concede that investigations on the development of other functional tests are needed. For this study, a functional test was decided on to complement the functional Xhosa syllabus discussed previously in this study. The communicative aspects of language which are not assessed by other tests may be tapped by functional tests.

4.11 Evaluation of oral proficiency in African languages in senior secondary schools under the Cape Department of Education

In February 1982 the Cape Department of Education drew up a detailed exposition of the examination requirements and allocation of marks, (Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope: Department of Education: Senior Secondary Course: Standard and Higher Grades 1982). In the syllabus, the objectives are stated as follows:

> It is attempted to co-ordinate the language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) of pupils so that they will be in a position to use the communicative means concerned in everyday situations and therefore be able to appreciate the value of Xhosa in various community roles in our

> multilingual country. The main objectives are to master the various categories of language usage i.e. the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, to such a degree that they coincide with the purposes of the expositions of the examination requirements and syllabus content for Xhosa (p. 63).

As far as listening and speaking skills (oral programme) are concerned, the aim is to develop the listening and speaking skills of the pupils in respect of various everyday themes (and their vocabulary) that occur in specific contact situations.

The following guidelines for testing, listening and speaking are mentioned in the syllabus outline:

A. Listening skills can be tested by e.g.
   - dictation
   - answers to questions set orally.

B. Speaking skills can be tested by e.g.
   - conducting a conversation
   - narrating an incident or describing something.

The directive also states that listening and speaking must be viewed as a unit. (Education Gazette 4 February 1982:66).

Sixty marks out of 400 are allocated for oral work. The assessment is made on a cumulative basis in the course of the year. The allocation is as follows:

-	listening	:	dictation/reading aloud	15 marks
-	listening	:	answering to questions	15 marks
-	speaking	:	conversations and descriptions	30 marks.

Candidates are tested on their ability to repeat orally single words, to repeat orally words in sentences, and to read aloud the prescribed **iintsomi** (folk tale) and other light reading material. Candidates' ability to answer orally questions that are set orally on the prescribed situations, concepts, functions and **iintsomi** is tested. A conversation

lasting about three to five minutes is conducted in Xhosa with each candidate on a topic that falls within his field of knowledge and experience. Candidates are also required to recount an event (taken from the **iintsomi**, for example) and to describe something.

Factors identified for evaluation are comprehension, pronunciation, fluency, phrasing, stress and intonation.

Examination requirements for the Senior Secondary Course Xhosa Higher Grade and Standard Grade (Third Language) are specified in the same Gazette (February 1982:104-108).

It was suggested earlier on that if one is teaching communicative competence, one should be testing it. This implies that test tasks should be natural acts of communication, which seems to rule out discrete-point tests as indicators of communicative competence. Integrative tests should therefore be given preference.

It would appear that language testing in Xhosa for Senior Certificate under the Cape Department of Education has not kept pace with the aims expressed in its communicative syllabus. Most of the requirements laid down for examination do not promote communicative testing.

In the oral examination, candidates are tested on their ability to

- repeat orally single words
- repeat orally words in sentences and
- read aloud the prescribed **iintsomi**.

(1982:104)

In the first place, the above activities are forms of discrete-point testing. They aim at accuracy of **usage** instead of effectiveness of **use** which should be the purpose of communicative testing. These activities are not meant to develop communicative effectiveness but to establish formal correctness. Communicative testing should, however, use authentic language, be set within a communicative situation, and be in a meaningful context.

None of these criteria is discernible in the activities stipulated in the examination requirements outlined.

In addition, an oral test of about sixty words consisting of single words, words in sentences not longer than ten words each, and sentences taken from the reading material for reading aloud, is set (1982:104). If it is borne in mind that a communicative test should attempt to bridge an information gap, represent an event, have a sequence and a learner must be able to use what he has learnt, outside language itself, this oral test seems to lie outside communicative testing.

On looking at these requirements, nothing is mentioned of integrated skills. Instead, candidates are encouraged to isolate skills. Nowhere are candidates expected to perform in appropriate social environments. No importance is attached to functions, notions or situations.

The evaluation card recommended for listening (dictation, reading aloud) suggests the following items for individual scoring: pronunciation, fluency, phrasing, stress and intonation, but makes no provision for use of appropriate language.

Candidates are expected to answer questions on iintsomi. Concepts and notions derived from **iintsomi** are not meant for communication, as defined within the communicative approach.

In order to be relevant, communication must be purposeful and be within a meaningful context.

In order to test speaking, candidates are expected to conduct a conversation in Xhosa on a topic falling within their field of knowledge and experience, recount an event, or to describe something. The above tests do not lend themselves to the simulation of real-life situations, nor are they authentic. Candidates should be encouraged to play meaningful roles in communicative situations.

Despite the criticism levelled at the testing techniques suggested by the Department, it is encouraging to note that there has been a decided movement away from the traditional oral lessons with its emphasis on memorised prose and poetry. Dictation, as a form of testing, has also been suggested for inclusion in the examination requirements.

The contents of the syllabus indicate that the Department is aware of recent linguistic developments. Further evidence of the Department's awareness of modern trends in language teaching is the priority it gives to listening and speaking. An innovation in the syllabus is the statement that listening and speaking must be viewed as a unit.

However commendable the inclusion of oral work in the final examination may be, such an examination can only be of value if it attains a certain standard of validity, reliability and practicality in its scoring procedure.

When the aim is to examine the ability to use the spoken language, the question must be asked: what is the desirable level of oral proficiency in the target language to be examined? For teaching methods to be successful, that level should not be too confined.

4.12 Oral examination for Nguni languages in Transvaal schools

Guidelines for oral examination for Higher and Standard Grades in Transvaal schools are as follows

A Luistervaardigheid kan getoets word deur bv. antwoorde op vrae wat mondeling gestel is

B Praatvaardigheid kan getoets word deur bv. - gesprekvoering - vertelling van 'n gebeurtenis of die beskrywing van 'n saak

C Hardop lees van voorbereide en onvoorbereide stukke

D Voorbereide en onvoorbereide gesprek/gesels

Punteverdeling by mondelinge eksamen:

Jaarpunt	(40)
Eksamenpunt	(60)
Opstuurpunt	(100)

(1981:20)

As can be observed, no guidance has been given to teachers on testing techniques to evaluate communicative competence by this Department. What the test wishes to achieve is not stated either. However, many of the comments on the Xhosa syllabus are relevant to the Nguni syllabus as well.

4.13 Conclusion

In the preceding discussion an attempt has been made to give a brief historical overview of the central issue of foreign or second language testing. Theoretical arguments for and against different models of language testing have been given. The state of the art of foreign/second language testing has been described.

With the introduction of functional testing, assumptions concerning the nature and structure of foreign/second language ability are now stated more explicitly. For example, Canale and Swain (1980) postulate three dimensions of communicative competence in their theoretical framework.

It has been apparent from this discussion that tests correspond closely to theories of language use. If teachers are doing communicative teaching, the development of communicative achievement and progress tests should therefore be no problem. All they have to do is to sample the syllabus. If the syllabus is communicative, the tests must be too. If the tests are not then perhaps the syllabus is not communicative either (Compare guidelines for oral examination, in 4.12).

This chapter has tried to show that in preparing a communicative test, it is important to become acquainted with a theory of language testing. Only that which is put into the construction of a particular test or set of tests by way of theoretical insight, reasoning or hypothesis- building in advance, will come out of it. Understanding theoretically what is to be tested or has been tested is essential. What is required is a move away from psychometric testing to a more comprehensive applied linguistic approach.

CHAPTER 5

TEST CONSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Introduction

The term test is applied to a measure (taken under specified conditions and within a specified time-limit) of knowledge and ability designed to yield information for a specific purpose, and intended to be applied to a specific group of people in such a way that the performance of a particular individual may be compared fairly with that of others in the group, (Brumfit and Roberts 1983:122). To date it seems that no attempt has been made to construct a Xhosa language test at Senior Certificate level which may be used by teachers under the Cape Department of Education. It appears that teachers of Xhosa tend to devise their own classroom tests which are generally prepared, administered and scored by one teacher.

In this chapter an attempt to apply the theory of communicative language testing is discussed. In the discussion the following steps in the process of constructing a Xhosa test, appropriate for the communicative Xhosa syllabus, will be explained:

- planning the test
- preparing the test items and directions
- submitting the test to review and revising on the basis of review
- pretesting the material and analysing the results
- assembling the final form of the test
- reproducing the test and
- test constraints.

Teachers frequently ask how to test communicatively. Porter (1983:199) points out that the proposals for communicative testing (at this stage) contribute only a set of hypotheses which need empirical validation. It is obvious that further research is required, especially for testing in general courses.

5.2 Xhosa oral achievement

This study is concerned with devising an educational test of oral achievement in Xhosa at Senior Certificate level under the Cape Department of Education. Research procedure included interviews with:

- officials of the Cape Department of Education concerned with the teaching of languages

- practising teachers in Xhosa under the Cape Department of Education and

- language testing researchers.

The literature study that was done and information gained from the interviews were analysed and the information was used in developing the test.

The director of the Cape Department of Education granted permission for research to be conducted in schools under his jurisdiction. Schools which offered Xhosa at Senior Certificate level were used. Necessary arrangements were made beforehand and the specific schools were notified ahead of time. The language testing research focused on the learner's oral performance in Xhosa. The premise was that to know a language is primarily/mainly to display a competence in using its skills (Spolsky 1978). In this test, items were developed in such a manner that the testee would be able to display his proficiency in manipulating oral skills.

Since this test assesses what has been achieved or learnt from what was taught in a particular course or a series of courses it is by definition an achievement test (Cohen 1980:9). The type of the syllabus on which the test is based is communicative. Consequently, the test is a communicative/functional test. The term `functional' was selected because functions, notions and situations were to be used as test items. In addition, the principles of testing were to be drawn from the notional-functional teaching approach. As has been discussed by Farhady (1983), the theory behind the notional-functional approach evolves from the anticipated communicative needs of the learner. The approach attempts to identify and teach the language activities that the learner is most likely to be faced with in real-life situations. In other words, the notional-functional approach shifts the instruction focus from the linguistic to the communicative needs of the learner.

The identification and classification of language functions can never be exhaustive. One may also agree with Wilkins (1976) and Widdowson (1979) that the numerous functions to be tested may cause problems similar to those of discrete-point tests. However, regarding these problems, Farhady (1983:258) explains that there is an extremely important difference between the two types of seemingly similar problems. In the functional test, any single item involves an independent communicative behaviour regardless of the number and type of linguistic rules. No matter what the function, there is no need to investigate whether it does (or how much it does) contribute to the process of communication. This is not true with discrete-point test items because they involve discrete rules with no specific reference to the actual or potential use of those rules in real communication. A testing approach which is intended to follow the notional-functional approach should therefore include items which focus on assessing the testee's ability to handle the communicative functions of language, rather than his ability to use linguistic forms only. This does not imply that the linguistic accuracy of a sentence is de-emphasised. On the contrary, it is considered as important as any other component of behaviour.

As to the nature of the functional test, one may agree with Wilkins (1976) that it should basically involve integrated rather than isolated skills. Wilkins points out that a functional test should seek answers to such questions as the examinee's ability to perform certain functions in appropriate social environments. In developing a functional test, then, selection of the functions is of crucial importance.

5.3 Guidelines for constructing the test

5.3.1 Planning the test

The test had to be an integrated one in order to be functional. This meant that language in a test could not be regarded as a set of unrelated items. The items had to be integrated and tested in combination with one another.

Another implication of the above statement was that language learning is purposeful. The purpose had to be always communicative and what was to be tested was communicative ability and not formal knowledge.

Another guideline was the aspect of communicative language proficiency, which is an important aspect in communication. In this type of proficiency the focus is on eliciting social and interpersonal uses of language through spoken channels. Communication is regarded primarily as a form of social interaction in which emphasis is normally placed less

on grammatical forms and literal meaning and more on the participants and their purpose in using language i.e. on the social meaning of utterances, for instance, explaining, expressing opinions and enquiring.

Authenticity was also important. This meant that testing undertaken had to be real-life interactive communicative operations. The test had to simulate real situations in order to provide a better understanding of what the ultimate tasks in language performance would be, so the test items had to be in a meaningful context. Although real contexts are illusory in a pedagogical setting, the examiner attempted to maintain a realistic setting when conducting the test.

The test had to have content validity. Content validity refers to the ability of a test to measure what has been taught and subsequently learnt by students. Language material used in the test was selected for its high frequency of use.

The test had to be valid, a test of what it claimed to test, Xhosa oral proficiency and not memory or interest for instance. It also had to be reliable, constructed in such a way as to yield consistent results. The test had to be practical as far as administration and scoring are concerned.

This test had to possess the characteristics of a communicative test. It had to assess language used for a purpose beyond itself. It had to relate to communicative circumstances and not merely create an opportunity for the learner to display his language so it could be assessed. It also had to be conducted in such a way that an information gap was bridged between tester and pupil. It had to propose a language-using purpose which could be fulfilled by the communicative skill the learner had so far acquired.

The test was direct. It was conducted while the examiner faced the pupil and both were engaged in communicative dialogue.

5.3.2 Preparing the test items and directions

Test items used in the communicative test were selected from the Xhosa syllabus by means of frequency counts. The Xhosa syllabus prescribed by the Cape Department of Education consists of a comprehensive list of situations, functions and notions, (See The Education Gazette 1982:67; 71-72; 76-77).

On looking at the functions and notions prescribed in the syllabus, the problem which confronts one is appropriate selection. This problem was however solved by referring to an unpublished research study (Du Plessis 1982) conducted by the Department of African Languages at the University of Stellenbosch. In this study, an analysis was made of functions and notions which have been prescribed for the Senior Certificate. The rate of frequency of the functions and notions was tested by means of a specific communicative text. This resulted in the following functions and notions:

Functions

Very high frequency	**High frequency**	**Very low frequency**
Agreeing - Ukuvumelana	Asking - Ukubuza	Advising - Ukucebisa
Certain - Ukuqinisekisa	Describing - Ukuchaza	
Satisfaction - Ukonela	Denying - Ukulandula	
Disappointment - Udano		
Warning - Isiyalo		
Wishing - Iminqweno		

Notions

Length of time - Ubude bexesha

Frequency - Ukuphindaphinda

Quantity - Ubuninzi

Reflection - Ukucinga

Speed - Isantya

Change - Inguqulelo

Moisture - Ubumanzi

Contrast - Ukwahlukisa

Temporary - Okwexeshana

Material - Umchako

Inclusion - Ubandakanyo

When selecting functions and notions to be used as test items, all those with a very high frequency were automatically selected. The rest were drawn from the other two categories of functions (high frequency and very low frequency of use). The following functions and notions were selected as test items in constructing the test under discussion.

Functions	**Notions**
Denying - Ukulandula	Length of time - Ubude bexesha
Certain - Ukuqinisekisa	Frequency - Ukuphindaphinda
Satisfaction - Ukonela	Quantity - Ubuninzi
Disappointment - Udano	Reflection - Ukucinga
Warning - Isiyalo	Speed - Isantya
Describing - Ukuchaza	Contrast - Ukwahlukisa
Agreement - Ukuvumelana	Temporary - Okwexeshana
	Change - Inguqulelo

Three topics were chosen at random. These were sport, South Africa and newspapers.

5.3.3 Submitting the test to review and pretesting

A provisional test was constructed based on the guidelines discussed and comprising selected functions, notions and situations. Once the researcher was satisfied with his material, he submitted it to consultants. Changes were made to items based on the comments received.

The materials were then pretested. The items were tried out on two schools, with 7 pupils per school. This was administered to a number of pupils of the same kind as those for whom the test was being designed. Only those items which proved statistically satisfactory in the pretest were included in the final version of the test. Inclusion was determined by their suitable level of difficulty - neither too difficult nor too easy for the pupils being tested. Second, inclusion was determined by the items' ability to discriminate between those pupils who knew the material or had the skills or abilities being tested, and those who did not. The two schools, one Afrikaans medium and one English medium were selected for three practical considerations, proximity, size and language medium. The test was conducted at Senior Certificate level. The trial test was administered individually to fourteen pupils. It was estimated that the testing period per pupil would be fifteen minutes but it proved to be twenty-five minutes. The order of the subtests was constant. All the tests were administered by the researcher.

In order to maximise uniformity and co-operation, the researcher explained to the testees why the test was being given and read a specific set of instructions.

For each section, the researcher read the stimulus sentence or question. A sentence or question was repeated if necessary.

The testees sat facing the tester at a table on which was placed a tape recorder. The pupil's response was recorded on tape and part of the assessment was made by the examiner at a later stage.

The trial test was subdivided into four sections:

- listening comprehension test
- understanding of selected functions within contexts
- understanding of selected notions in various contexts
- unstructured conversation based on specific situations.

SECTION A

The examiner attempted to put the pupil at ease. He took the initiative and greeted the pupil. He asked a few questions in English or Afrikaans, e.g. name, address, home language and any further questions deemed necessary in order to build up the pupil's confidence so that he would respond naturally and unaffectedly. No assessment was made at this stage.

SECTION B (Listening comprehension test)
AFDELING B (Gehoorbegripstoets)

Instruction to the pupil

I shall read you some sentences to which you must respond by doing something physical, or by agreeing or disagreeing, i.e. by saying "yes" or "no".

For example, if I say, "Jonga efestileni", you should respond by looking at the window.
If I say, "Iiyunivesithi zininzi kule dolophu", you should say, "Hayi", because this is not true.

If I ask you, "Uyazibona na ezi ncwadi phezu kwetafile?", you should respond by saying, "Ewe", if you see books on the table.

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek sal vir jou 'n paar sinne lees waarop jy moet reageer deur of fisies iets te doen of deur "ja" te antwoord indien jy saamstem, of "nee" indien jy verskil.

As ek bv. se: "Jonga efestileni", moet jy reageer deur dadelik na die venster te kyk.
As ek se: "Iiyunivesithi zininzi kule dolophu" en dit is onwaar, moet jy se: "Hayi".
As ek vra: "Uyazibona na ezi ncwadi phezu kwetafile?" moet jy "Ewe" antwoord indien jy wel boeke op die tafel sien.

I shall start now/Ek begin nou

1	Command	Vala amehlo. (Close your eyes.)
2	**Question**	Le glasi iphezu kwetafile izele na ngamanzi? (Is the glass on the table full of water?)
3	**Statement**	Kufundisa amaxhego odwa kwesi sikolo. (Only grandfathers teach at this school.)
4	**Statement**	Inqununu yesi sikolo ngumfazi/yindoda. (The principal at this school is a woman/man.)
5	**Command**	Susa iphephandaba esitulweni, libeke etafileni. (Remove the newspaper from the chair, put it on the table.)
6	**Question**	Ndinxibe ihempe emnyama neqhina elibomvu? (Am I wearing a black shirt and a red tie?)
7	**Statement**	Namhlanje imvula iyanetha kuyabanda. (Today it is raining; it is cold.)
8	**Command**	Thabatha usiba oluluhlaza ubhale ephepheni igama, ifani, nebanga okulo. (Take a blue pen and write your name, surname and the standard you are in on the paper.)
9	**Question**	Yinyaniso le nto yokuba uhamba isikolo ukususela ngoMvulo kude kube yiCawa? (Is it true that you attend school from Monday to Sunday?)
10	**Question**	Ezi ncwadi ziphezu kwetafile zibhalwe ngumntu omnye? (Have the books on the table been written by one person?)

11	**Statement**	Kushushu kakhulu namhlanje abantu baza kudada emanzini. (It is very hot today and the people are going to swim in the pool.)
12.	**Command**	Phakama uqokelele zonke iincwadi, wakugqiba zifake ebhokisini. (Stand up and put all the books into a pile; when you have finished put them in the box.)

(Commands: 4 Questions: 4 Statements: 4)

SECTION C SERIES A (Functions)
AFDELING C REEKS A (Funksies)

Instruction to the pupil

I am going to ask you a few questions and you must answer me in Xhosa each time.

For example, I may ask "Uyathemba ukuba umhlobo wakho uza kufika?" (Do you hope your friend will arrive?)
You may answer "Ewe (ndiyathemba)", if you hope that your friend will arrive.

Opdrag aan leerling

Ek gaan vir jou 'n paar vrae vra waarop jy in Xhosa moet antwoord.
Gestel ek vra: "Uyathemba ukuba umhlobo wakho uza kufika?" dan kan jy as volg antwoord: "Ewe (ndiyathemba)", as jy hoop dat jou vriend sal kom.

I shall start now/Ek begin nou

1	**Ukuvumelana**	Uyahambisana nale nto yokubethwa kwabafundi esikolweni?
	(Agreement)	(Do you agree that children should be beaten at school?)
2	**Ukuqinisekisa**	Yinyaniso le nto yokuba umdlalo weqakamba udlalwa ehlotyeni?
	(Ascertaining)	(Is it true that cricket is played in summer?)
3	**Ukwanela**	Xa wanele kukusebenza ekhaya wenza ntoni?
	(Satisfaction)	(What do you do, when you have finished for home duties?)

4	**Udano**	Udaniswe yintoni kwimidlalo yesikolo (yombhoxo) yehoki?
	(Disappointment)	(What has disappointed you in rugby/hockey?)
5	**Isiyalelo**	Abantu abanxiba impahla eshushu ebusika balumkele ntoni?
	(Warning)	(What are people who wear warm clothes in winter afraid of?)
6	**Ukuchaza**	Ufunda eziphi izifundo kwesi sikolo?
	(Describing)	(Which subjects do you learn in this school?)
7	**Ukuvumelana**	Wena ufunda kwibanga leshumi kulo unyaka, uyavuma?
	(Agreement)	(You are in standard ten this year. Do you agree?)
8	**Ukuqinisekisa**	Uqiniseka ngantoni eluviweni ukuphela konyaka?
	(Ascertaining)	(What are you sure of in the exams at the end of the year?)
9	**Udano**	Uva into embi yintoni namhlanje?
	(Disappointment)	(What makes you feel bad today?)
10	**Isiyalelo**	Xa uza kuphatha imali eninzi ulumkela ntoni?
	(Warning)	(What are you careful of when you carry a lot of money?)
11	**Ukuvumelana**	Uyavumelana nam ukuba esi sikolo sinabafundi abambalwa?
	(Agreement)	(Do you agree with me that this school has few pupils?)
12	**Ukwanela**	Wanela yintoni ngexesha leKrismesi?
	(Satisfaction)	(What do you like most about Christmas?)

SECTION C SERIES B (Notions)
AFDELING C REEKS B (Begrippe)

Instruction to the pupil

I am again going to ask you a few questions and you must answer me in Xhosa.

For example, I may ask: "Nizifunda nini izifundo zesiNgesi?" (When do you study English?)
Your answer may be, "Yonke imihla." (Every day.)
I will read each question twice and you must respond immediately.

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek gaan weer vir jou 'n paar vrae vra waarop jy in Xhosa moet antwoord.

Gestel ek vra: "Nizifunda nini izifundo zesiNgesi?" dan
kan jy "Yonke imihla" antwoord.
Ek sal elke vraag twee maal lees en jy moet onmiddellik daarna antwoord.

I shall start now/Ek begin nou

1	**Ubude bexesha**	Uya iintsuku ezingaphi esikolweni ngeveki?
	(Length of time)	(How many days a week do you go to school?)
2	**Ukuphindaphinda**	Wakha waya eMelika?
	(Frequency)	(Have you been to America?)
3	**Ubuninzi**	Maninzi kakhulu amaNdiya eFreyistata?
	(Quantity)	(Are there many Indians in the Free State?)
4	**Ukucinga**	Ucinga ukuba sesiphi esona sifundo sibalulekileyo esikolweni?
	(Reflection)	(Which do you think is the most important subject at school?)
5	**Isantya**	Iimoto zimele ukuhamba ngesiphi isantya phakathi edolophini?
	(Speed)	(At what speed are cars supposed to travel in town?)
6	**Ukwahlula**	Iintyatyambo zasehlotyeni ziyafana nezasebusika?
	(Contrast)	(Are summer flowers the same as winter flowers?)
7	**Ubuninzi**	Ifunyanwa phi igolide eninzi eMzantsi Afrika?
	(Quantity)	(Where is most gold found in South Africa?)
8	**Ukuphindaphinda**	Xa udibana nomhlobo wakho nisoloko nincokola ngezifundo?
	(Frequency)	(When you meet your friend, do you always talk about school subjects?)
9	**Ubude bexesha**	Kwenzeka ntoni wakufika emva kwexesha eklasini?
	(Length of time)	(What happens when you arrive late for class?)
10	**Okwexeshana**	Umfundi ofuna ukuba ngugqirha, ufunda ixesha elingakanani eyunivesithi?
	(Temporary)	(How long does a student who wants to become a doctor study?)
11	**Inguqulelo**	(1) Guqulela esi sivakalisi esiNgesini:
	(Change)	(Translate this phrase into English: "(1) Imithi (1) emide (1) yepayini." Long trees of pine)
12	**Ubuninzi**	Bonke abafundi kwesi sikolo bafunda isiXhosa?
	(Quantity)	(Do all the pupils in this school learn Xhosa?)

SECTION D
AFDELING D

Instruction to the pupil

I shall give you three topics.
You must choose one to discuss.
These are the topics:

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek gee drie onderwerpe.
Jy moet een daaruit kies om te bespreek.
Hier is die onderwerpe:

1	**Imidlalo**	Khetha umdlalo owuthanda kakhulu, undichazele ngawo.
	(Sport)	(Choose a sport which you like best, and tell me about it.)
2	**Umzantsi-Afrika**	Wena uncokola nabantu baseMelika. Khawubaxelele ngomZantsi-Afrika.
	(South Africa)	(You are talking to people from/of America. Tell them about South Africa.)
3	**Amaphepha-ndaba**	Ucinga ukuba kubalulekile ukufunda amaphepha-ndaba? Kutheni?
	(Newspapers)	(Do you think it is important to read newspapers? Why?)

For the listening comprehension test, commands were used in order to simulate real-life situations. In asking the pupil to carry out a command, the examiner hoped to establish the level of development of the listening comprehension skill of the pupil being tested. The commands were formulated in such a manner that the pupil could respond only if he/she understood the meaning of the vocabulary items used in the command.

Questions were asked for the purpose of obtaining information from the pupil. Statements used in the test items were to establish how well the pupil understood the message communicated to him/her.

SCORING

SECTION A

No marks were allocated in this section.

SECTION B

One point per acceptable item of information comprehended by the pupil as reflected in his physical or verbal response.

(12)

SECTION C

SERIES A

One point per acceptable utterance made by the pupil (12)

SERIES B

One point per acceptable utterance made by the pupil (12)

SECTION D

(See oral evaluation form.) (20)

(TOTAL: 56)

SECTION D

ORAL EXAMINATION EVALUATION FORM

PROFICIENCY	NO RESPONSE	VERY POOR	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
	1	2	3	4	5	
FLUENCY						
GRAMMAR						
VOCABULARY						
EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE						
TOTAL: 20						

SCORING GUIDELINES

DEFINITION OF EACH LEVEL ON THE SCALE

FLUENCY

No response

Very poor

Speaker has many unnatural pauses.

Poor

Communication is realised through considerable effort on the part of the interviewer, speaker leaves sentences unfinished, lapses into silence, appears unable or unwilling to keep the conversation going.

Fair

Relies heavily on material to formulate response. While the speaker may produce a fairly lengthy reply, the intended meaning is not always clear.

Good

Speaker is confident of the ability to communicate and makes a considerable effort to get a point across, even non-verbally. Willingly adds material to the conversation.

Excellent

Speaker is sufficiently confident of the ability to communicate by using the language actively to seek information. May begin asking the interviewer questions. Shows awareness of differences in levels of usage.

GRAMMAR

No response

Very poor

Grammar almost entirely inaccurate.

Poor

Can use only brief statement with no real syntax. May try to use isolated words or phrases, but is unable to make their interrelationships clear.

Fair

Shows awareness of grammatical features of the target language (classes, agreement, tenses). Transforms verb forms and word order into the forms and syntax needed for a reply.

Good

Grammatical errors do not cloud meaning. Does not need to model a reply on structures used previously. Able to use tenses other than the present appropriately.

Excellent

Errors are rare. Speaker can respond to corrections suggested by the interviewer or corrects own errors readily. Uses accurately nearly all the grammar presented to date. Willing to experiment with acquired language material.

VOCABULARY

No response

Very poor

Vocabulary very limited.

Poor

Vocabulary insufficient for simple conversation.

Fair

Sometimes inserts an English/Afrikaans word which has an equivalent pronunciation in Xhosa. Lacks active vocabulary.

Good

Adequate command of vocabulary taught. Can ask interviewer in target language to fill in occasional gaps. Choice of words usually accurate.

Excellent

Able to use virtually all vocabulary required. Has learnt extra vocabulary to describe special interests.

EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE

No response

Pupil is constantly asked questions to encourage response.

Very poor

No utterances rendered.

Poor

Pupil makes little effort to communicate.

Fair

Pupil makes an effort to communicate. Tries to complete the task. May add something not required by the task.

Good

Pupil makes a special effort to communicate. Makes an extreme effort to complete the task. Goes beyond the required task.

Excellent

Pupil makes an unusually good effort to communicate. Shows almost over-zealous effort to complete the task. Goes way beyond the required task. Uses all possible resources, verbal and non-verbal, to express herself/himself.

5.4 Analysing the pretest results

On receiving the data on the trial test, it was decided on the advice of consultants to do the following calculations. These had a bearing on validity, reliability and on possible interpretation of the results.

The researcher, in consultation with the consultants, calculated the significance of the difference of the various variables in the test as well as the correlation of these variables with one another.

The consultants assisted the researcher in determining acceptability. This was based on the following factors:

- discrimination between good and bad performance in the trial test
- significant spread in the allocation of marks amongst the testees
- practicability in administering the test
- comparison of the trial test results with other school results obtained in Xhosa
- comparison of the internal sections of all the subtests
- statistical significance of difference
- correlation
- relationship between the different sections of the test.

The following table shows the results of the trial test as well as school results gained during the first quarter of the term.

TABLE 1 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

SCHOOL	PUPIL	SEX	HOME LANG	SECTIONS* OF XHOSA TEST				TOTAL %	SCHOOL RESULTS (XHOSA)	SCHOOL ORAL TEST (XHOSA)
				B	C		D			
					CA	CB				
				(12)	(12)	(12)	(20)	(56)%	%	%
A	1	F	Eng	5	3	0	8	16	28,5	51,3	56
	2	F	Dutch	11	6	9	10	36	64,2	80	73
	3	F	Eng	11	7	11	13	42	75	76	75
	4	F	Eng	12	10	10	13	45	80,3	76,5	70
	5	F	Eng	8	4	7	10	29	51,7	67,8	63
	6	F	Eng	8	9	6	11	34	60,7	60,8	61
	7	F	Eng	8	3	4	11	26	46,4	51,7	56
B	1	F	Afr	6	5	4	10	25	44,6	63,3	63,3
	2	F	Afr	6	2	3	8	19	33,9	53,3	53
	3	F	Afr	6	2	3	8	19	33,9	50	50
	4	F	Afr	8	6	7	10	31	55,3	63,3	63
	5	M	Afr	6	4	3	9	22	39,2	50	50
	6	F	Afr	6	8	4	9	27	48,2	46,6	46,6
	7	F	Afr	6	5	4	10	25	44,6	58,3	58,3

*SECTION

B - Test on listening comprehension

CA - Test on functions

CB - Test on notions

D - Test on unstructured conversation.

5.5 Testing for validity reliability and practicality

5.5.1 Validity

It is customary to distinguish various types of validity: face, criterion and construct validity. To determine whether a test shows any of the three types of validity mentioned above, it may be subjected to certain forms of evaluation.

For establishing face validity, test consultants may be asked to evaluate how applicable the test is to its purpose; criterion validity may be ascertained by selecting an available

external criterion which is supposed to measure the same characteristic that the test sets out to measure; and construct validity may be determined by showing or arguing how the test items actually represent the construct of the test.

Face validity of this test was determined by consulting test consultants during the phase of constructing the test, as explained above.

Construct validity was argued in the overview of how the test items, and their organisation into various sections, were selected and finally formulated.

Criterion validity may be determined statistically. As stated earlier on, an external criterion is required. In this study, the only available external criterion was the scores given by teachers at the two schools of the individual pupils in their Xhosa tests. To facilitate maximum comparison with the trial test, tests results for the first quarter were selected as the criterion. Two sets of information were used: the total Xhosa school test results and the oral Xhosa school test as taken during the above-mentioned test.

It can be argued that the total Xhosa school test set out to evaluate writing and comprehension in Xhosa, while the trial test had been structured to test listening, comprehension, notions, functions and unstructured conversation. These are two sets of variables.

Results of the trial test and the total Xhosa school test, therefore, were expected to be different.

Based on the data presented in Table 1, application of the Spearman rank-order correlation gave a value of 0,21, which is regarded as a low correlation.

The coefficient of correlation is a statistic which expresses the degree of relationship between two sets of test scores or other variables. In correlation studies, researchers are interested in determining the degree of relationship between pairs of two or more variables. In other words, correlation studies allow researchers to determine the extent to which scores on one test are associated with scores on another test.

Spearman's rank-order correlation Rs measures correlation in ranking order of testees according to the two measurements. A test for difference between means, according to the t-test, produced a value of -3,64 (significant at 0,01). These statistical values confirmed that different results were gained by the two measures.

On the strength of this outcome, it was concluded that the trial test measured different characteristics from the total Xhosa school test.

It can be argued that the oral Xhosa school test came nearest to measuring oral proficiency in Xhosa, which was what the trial test set out to do. It was therefore expected that there would be a high correlation between results of the oral Xhosa school test and the trial test.

Applications of the Spearman rank-order (Rs = 0,75) and the product-moment correlation coefficient (r = 0,84) confirmed this expectation. If there had been a perfect relationship between the two sets of scores, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient would have been +1. A + 1 correlation coefficient indicates a perfect positive correlation. The greater the value, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. It can be stated therefore that (Rs = 0,75) and (r = ,84) are great enough (they are near enough to +1) to regard the correlation as high. Based on the above findings it can be concluded that sections of the Xhosa communicative test showed a high level of criterion validity.

5.5.2 Validity and reliability

In order to evaluate both the validity and reliability of the different sections of the trial test, mean scores, standard deviations, as well as differences amongst the various mean scores were inspected (Table 2).

TABLE 2 INTERNAL COMPARISON OF SECTIONS IN TRIAL TEST

SECTION OF XHOSA TRIAL TEST	MEANS	ST. DEVIATION
B	63,66	18,65
C A	44,32	21,35
C B	44,62	25,85
D	50,00	8,09
TOTAL	50,46	15,34
COMPARISON OF SECTIONS	**T VALUE**	**SIGNIFICANCE**
B - C A	6,78	0,01
B - C B	6,75	0,01
B - D	4,00	0,01
C A - C B	-0,11	-
C A - D	-1,36	-
C B - D	-1,02	-

On inspection of Table 2, particularly the column which shows the mean scores and the standard deviation, it will be noticed that section B of the trial test (listening comprehension) has a higher mean (63,66). This shows that the pupils' listening comprehension skill was better developed. This in line with the findings of Chastain (1976), Nord (1980), Wilkes (1981) and Thiele (1983).

Chastain (1976:278) points out that the four language skills are all based on the same language system, which seems to be acquired in a series of definitely sequenced operations. First, the learners perceive a certain sequence of the language and discriminate among what they consider to be important linguistic aspects of the language. Second, they comprehend the distinctions involved and begin to formulate their own language system. Third, based on their hypothesis about the language, they develop a personal competence. Fourth, once they have the competence, they begin to use their performance skills.

Nord (1980:5) confirms the above argument and points out that it is a well documented fact that comprehension precedes speaking in the young child. He states that this sequence of development - comprehension first, production second - is a functional property of the human brain, which should not be violated in language instruction. He maintains that foreign language instruction should discourage speaking until a high degree of comprehension is achieved, that is until the student can understand an elementary conversation and decode it with ease. Nord argues further that there appears to be extensive evidence to support the positive transfer from listening to speaking. This study also confirmed the above perception. The finding that the score of other sections show no statistical difference should be acceptable because C A and C B (notions and functions) are integrated components and should therefore show the same level of scores.

Acceptable performance in D presupposes linguistic ability to perform in C A and C B. Communication involves ability to use functions and notions correctly in appropriate situations. D is therefore composed of some components reflected in C A and C B and should therefore not show statistical difference in the scores. This is confirmed by the finding in Table 2.

B, C A and C B are objective tests and D is subjective. The standard deviations in B, C A and C B are higher than in D. The possible reason for this may be that the tester (in both cases) may be inclined to centre marking around mean positions. It was advised therefore that strict adherence to marking procedure in D should be followed.

5.5.3 Reliability

Since consistency of results is the basic concept of reliability of a test, if a test or subtest produces the same or very nearly the same relative ordering and distance between the individuals in the group on both occasions, the test would be judged to have high stability reliability. Stability reliability is often referred to as test-retest reliability because it is estimated by testing, some time later retesting the same individuals, and then correlating the scores.

Since only one tester was used for this study, it was necessary to determine if this tester applied the test in a consistent way. This is known as intra-individual reliability.

To test for reliability a test-retest procedure was used (Table 3). A high level of stability was established.

TABLE 3 PRESENTATION OF TEST AND RETEST RESULTS

SCHOOL	PUPIL	SEX	TRIAL TEST %	FINAL TEST %
A	1	F	28	28,5
	2	F	64	64,2
	3	F	75	75
	4	F	80	80
	5	F	51	51,7
	6	F	60	60,7
	7	F	46	46,4
B	1	F	44	44,6
	2	F	33	33,9
	3	F	33	33,9
	4	F	55	55,3
	5	M	39	39,2
	6	F	50	48,2
	7	F	44	44,6

In Table 3 above, the researcher tried to prove the reliability of the test. This was done by comparing the results of both the trial test and the final test obtained from some pupils at the same schools, at two monthly intervals. This test produced the same or very nearly the same relative ordering and distance between the individuals in the group on both occasions.

5.5.4 Practicability

Another feature of the trial test was its practicability, which involved such factors as time and ease of scoring. One may agree with Liskin-Gasparo (1984:483) that a direct test of writing and speaking ability will never be truly practical, since it would be conducted by human raters. Nevertheless, the trial test was easy to administer and to score. Although the time taken to administer the test was longer than expected, adjustments could be made to solve this problem.

The researcher also attempted to make the test as authentic as possible. Simulated real-life interactive communicative operations were used in preparing the test.

5.6 Overall remarks on the trial test

It was accepted that the trial test could be improved over a period of time. For example, the test would be more meaningful if all its test items were organised around a theme. Canale (1984:354) confirms the view that thematic organisation is one of the features worth considering in improving language testing. A thematically organised test would represent and group those tasks that provide a coherent, natural, and motivating structure to the test. In the trial test, for instance, the researcher should ideally have considered a variety of subthemes and language tasks naturally linked to an overall theme such as education. In section D the examiner could have asked each testee to tell him about his/her school for example. This technique would have bridged an information gap, since the examiner was a total stranger to all the testees. By using schooling as a theme, he would have been able to use the test items in a more cohesive and natural manner.

The test was integrated in that the functions and notions were used in a context. There was also social interaction between the examiner and the pupil. In other words, language was used for the purpose of bringing out social meaning. The pupil responded to what the examiner was saying to him. As the test was an achievement test by nature, it had elements of achievement in it which were related to the syllabus preceding it.

5.7 Assembling the final form of the test

Time was a crucial factor. The examiner was given specific times at which to visit the schools in order not to disturb the schools' programmes. It was realised that some of the language items used in the test were new to the pupils when the pupils took a longer time to respond. These few items were either deleted or substituted after consultation.

In sections B and C a sentence was included in the instruction to the pupil. It read as follows:

> Each sentence will be read twice and you must respond immediately after the second time. Elke sin sal twee maal gelees word. Nadat ek dit vir die tweede maal gelees het, moet jy so spoedig moontlik reageer.

This was intended to make the instructions as clear and explicit as possible. Because the pupil was not used to being addressed by a Xhosa mother-tongue speaker, it was assumed that he would experience difficulty at first in understanding the examiner.

In Section B item 7 the word "iyanetha" was substituted by "iyana". The pupils were acquainted with "iyana" as the word appears in the course book. It was decided to delete the word "kuyabanda" in order to deal with one thought in the sentence, thus saving responding time.

The word "emanzini" in item 11 was deleted for the same reason.

In section C series A, the word "weqakamba" in item 2 was replaced by "wombhoxo" to make it easier for the pupil to comprehend. The words "yombhoxo" and "yehoki" were deleted in order to cut down on reaction time by the pupil.

The phrase "uza kuphatha" was replaced by "uphethe". The former was found to be semantically incorrect in that it suggests one is cautious of what one possesses at that particular time.

Because the pupils were not used to the word "eMelika" in section C series B item 2, it was replaced by `ERhawutini'. Item 11 was replaced by the following:

"Indaba ze T.V. ziguqulwa ngubani?"

The reason for this change was that the original test item tended to evaluate translation skills of the pupils, a variable which this test was not intended to measure.

In section D, topic 1 was changed to read: Khetha imidlalo oyithanda kakhulu, undichazele ngayo.

This change gave the pupil the opportunity to discuss more than one sport. The pupil could thus use all the vocabulary related to the various sports instead of being restricted to discussing only one.

A final test was reproduced. Marks were allocated as in the trial test. A summary sheet was prepared for entering all available marks of each testee (see Appendix I).

5.8 Test administration

A total of 159 pupils was tested from twenty-six schools. The fourteen pupils tested in the provisional test were included in the group tested. This inclusion appeared to have no effect on the results of the overall test because on average the scores for the provisional as well as the main test were the same. The scoring was not abnormal.

Consider the following table:

TABLE 4 AVERAGE SCORES OF PROVISIONAL AND MAIN TESTS

SCHOOL	N	PROVISIONAL TEST AVERAGE %	MAIN TEST AVERAGE %
1	7	57,7	58,0
2	7	42,5	42,8

It was decided to include as subjects all the pupils enrolled to study Xhosa at Senior Certificate level under the Cape Department of Education. The tests were carried out in April and May 1985 in the Western Cape and in July of the same year in the Eastern Cape and Border. After the testing had been completed, the raw data was computed* and the data was displayed in computer printouts.

5.9 Evaluation of the final test

A further statistic was used to check the reliability of the full final test to ascertain discriminative reliability analysis. This was done by dividing the students into two groups:

the bottom twenty-five percent who obtained the lowest marks (group 1) and the top twenty-five percent who obtained the highest marks (group 2). The significance of differences in performance in the final test of the two groups was calculated. The results are given in the following table:

*Following: M. Norusis: Introductory statistics guide SPSSX

TABLE 5 COMPARISON OF GROUP1 AND GROUP2 IN FINAL TEST

GROUP	N	MEANS	SECTION OF XHOSA FINAL TEST	SIGNIFICANCE
1	45	43,7		
			B	0,000
2	40	85		
1	45	17,0		
			CA	0,000
2	40	71,2		
1	45	18,1		
			CB	0,000
2	40	73,2		
1	45	40,4		
			D	0,000
2	40	66,0		

In Table 5 the difference in performance in all the sections of the final test between group 1 and group 2 is shown to be highly significant, 0,000 (at .025 probability level). The performance of each group is also consistent. In other words, the lowest group maintains the same level of performance (remains lowest) in all the sections of the final test whilst the group with the highest marks maintains the same level of performance in the final test as well.

This table confirms the initial conclusion regarding the reliability of the test. Therefore, the test met its requirements. The above discussion has attempted to prove the test's validity and reliability.

5.10 Test constraints

The examiner as well as the testees were subjected to several constraints. These were similar to those identified by Mareschal (1980:48):

- finding tricks to make artificial situations look more natural and conducive to spontaneous speech
- enticing confidence on the part of the testee
- developing a test which is simple, easy to score, short and valid.

To build up the pupil's confidence, the examiner took the initiative, greeting the pupil, asking a few questions and explaining the purpose of the test. This encouraged the pupil respond fairly naturally and unaffectedly.

From the onset, the test was constructed in an economic manner so as to be practicable and to save time.

5.11 Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt to merge linguistic theory with practice has been discussed. The researcher has shown how the objectives of a communicative syllabus may be evaluated by means of a communicative language test.

Steps and guidelines which may be followed in constructing a language test have been suggested and applied in constructing a communicative test for pupils learning Xhosa at Senior Certificate level. The test items did not emphasise linguistic accuracy, but the ability to function effectively through language in particular settings and contexts. The implication was that linguistic activity should be of kinds and under conditions which approximate real life.

The application of communicative language testing to the communicative language teaching approach has been an attempt to show how linguistic theory can be tested in practice, and how the difficulties of practice can be referred to theory. It is obvious, however, that further research is still required.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS OF XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter an alternative Xhosa communicative test which set out to measure effectively whether the objectives of the Departmental syllabus (1982:63) had been attained, was drawn up. This test was first subjected to evaluation in a trial run in order to determine the level of validity, reliability and practicality. Once it had been established that the level was acceptable, the test was administered to Senior Certificate pupils in schools in three areas, the Western Cape (Area 1), Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage (Area 2) and Border (Area 3), under the Cape Department of Education.

The main aims of this chapter are to

- present the test results obtained by administering this Xhosa communicative test against the background of different variables which may have affected the scores gained by the testees
- explain discrepancies with regard to sample and data
- compare the test results of the Xhosa communicative test with those obtained by the same testees in the quarterly oral tests, an oral year mark on tests administered by teachers of Xhosa at each of the schools visited and the average percentage score obtained in Xhosa, in the Cape Senior Certificate Examination result, 1985.
- provide a summary based on the results.

6.2 Variables

Four variables were selected:

- sex
- home language
- the grade on which Xhosa had been followed at school, Xhosa Higher or Standard Grade
- the area where the school is located.

The selection of the above variables was based on a literature survey.

6.2.1 Sex

Research indicates that sex determines the extent to which oral performance affects achievement (see McGuiness and Pribram 1978; Powell 1979 and Liski and Puntanen 1983).

Liski and Puntanen (1983) undertook a study aimed at determining the extent to which oral performance in spoken English is affected by variables which have been found to be related to achievement in group conversation tests of English as a foreign language. In this study, sex proved to be one of the most important variables in explaining differences in language skills. Liski and Puntanen point out that systematic differences were found between males and females in their data. Comparison between the girls' and the boys' distribution of marks revealed that the girls in their study were better than the boys at matriculation level (Liski and Puntanen 1983:239).

Evidence exists of male superiority in spatial ability, i.e. in activities in which the ability to organise and relate visual inputs in spatial context is uppermost (Hutt 1972 and Maccoby and Jacklin 1974).

The role expectation of boys in their future life as husbands/providers may direct them to mainly instrumental choices regarding their subjects of study for examination purposes. The practical aspect of the sciences and their direct relevance to career, or even job prospects, lends importance to them in the eyes of young males, but the same cannot be said of languages.

The present study supports Powell (1979) concerning the performance of girls as opposed to boys. He points out that international studies for the evaluation of educational achievement in both French and English as a foreign language showed that girls perform better universally. He also points out that more girls than boys study languages to examinable levels.

According to Powell (1979) international tests in modern language achievement carried out at the same time as those for science have provided ample data for researchers to be able to conclude not only that second language learning is a "feminine" activity in terms of numbers and attitude but that girls excel in terms of overall attainment. Just as boys are superior to girls in measurement of spatial ability, so girls excel in virtually all aspects of the linguistic process (Powell 1979:22).

Studies conducted by McGuiness and Pribram (1978) suggest fundamental differences between the sexes in certain psycholinguistic and neurological activities. They conducted an experiment in which male and female students aged 18-21 were tested on visual and auditory

search tasks, requiring them to locate either a target letter or a target sound. While the men in the experiments performed comparatively well in tasks in which a word was presented visually, in purely auditory tasks the women showed a marked tendency to respond faster in all tests; in matching sounds to words they were vastly superior. The data specifically indicated that the commonly found inability to spell is entirely due to incorrect perception of an auditory signal and an inability to form or assess a visual representation while operating in an auditory mode.

However, Powell and Littlewood (1982:155) warn that overt labelling of languages as "female" activities may deter yet more male students from opting to study languages augmenting educational and vocational arguments and independent of social pressures.

6.2.2 Home language

The point was made in Chapter 1 that South Africa has a variety of languages, dialects and linguistic communities. South Africa has two official languages, English and Afrikaans. There are various immigrant languages which are spoken in addition to the official languages.

The impact of the linguistic situation on education, administration, official policy, indeed on every aspect of day-to-day life is felt by everyone in the country. As far as education is concerned, for instance, pupils in schools which fall under provincial departments of education have to be taught through the medium of either English or Afrikaans. In most instances, the language of instruction is also taught as a mother tongue. The other language (Afrikaans or English) is compulsory and is taught as a second language.

The selection of home language as a variable was made to establish whether there is any statistically significant difference between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking pupils in the level of Xhosa oral proficiency.

The following table shows that in total there are more English-speaking people in the three areas studied, than Afrikaans-speaking.

TABLE 6 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH- AND AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN THE WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER

POPULATION	WESTERN CAPE		P.E.-UITENHAGE		BORDER		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
ENGLISH-SPEAKING	266,066	64,17	77,511	45,92	55,802	79,58	399,379
AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING	148,559	35,83	91,298	54,08	14,318	20,42	254,179
TOTAL	414,625	100,00	168,809	100,00	70,120	100,00	

Based on 1980 Census

6.2.3 Grade

Differentiation between Xhosa Higher Grade and Xhosa Standard Grade occurs only with regard to the examination, which provides for a choice between the number of books and therefore in the answering of questions on the prescribed literature (The Education Gazette 1982:87).

As far as standards are concerned, the Higher Grade syllabus ought to set higher requirements than Standard Grade, in other words, the Higher Grade should require greater insight into language, a higher level in regard to language skills, a more extensive vocabulary than Standard Grade does. Based on the above differentiation, the possibility exists that pupils doing Xhosa on the Higher Grade may perform better than those doing it on the Standard Grade. This assumption may be based on academic ability. It is also likely that pupils who take Xhosa on the Higher Grade may have an aptitude for it. It is also possible that they may have spoken it from childhood, having grown up amongst Xhosa- speaking people.

6.2.4 Area

It is possible that in an area where the majority of the population speak the target language, this may have a positive influence on the learners of that language. As mentioned earlier on, exposure is a major factor in the effective acquisition of a language. One could therefore expect pupils who may be more exposed to the target language to obtain

better scores in the Xhosa communicative test. The assumption is that the smaller the social distance between the two groups, the easier it will be for the members of the second language group to acquire the target language (Schumann 1976b, Rivers 1983).

The following table shows the total population distribution in the three areas categorised according to language population residing in the Western Cape, Port Elizabeth- Uitenhage and Border.

TABLE 7 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUPS, IN AREAS OF THE WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER BASED ON THE 1980 CENSUS

POPULATION	WESTERN CAPE		P.E. - UITENHAGE		BORDER	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
ENGLISH-SPEAKING	266,066	45,60	77,511	14,96	55,802	32,72
AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING	148,559	25,46	91,298	17,61	14,318	8,40
XHOSA-SPEAKING	168,872	28,94	349,509	67,43	100,394	58,88
TOTAL	583,497	100,00	518,318	100,00	170,54	100,00

CENSUS 80 (1985)

Table 7 shows that in all the areas except in the Western Cape, Xhosa-speaking people are in the majority. By virtue of their numbers, they may have a positive linguistic influence on both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking residents of Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border.

6.3 Statistical concepts

A major object of statistical method is to organise and summarise quantitative data in order to facilitate understanding (Anastasi 1982). A first step in bringing order into raw data is to tabulate the scores into a **frequency distribution** as shown in Table 8. Such a distribution is prepared by grouping the scores into convenient **class intervals** and tallying each score in the appropriate interval (Anastasi 1982). When all scores have been entered, the tallies are counted to find the frequency, or number of cases, in each class interval. The sums of these frequencies will equal **N, the total number** of cases in the group.

A group of scores can also be described in terms of some measure of **central tendency**. Such a measure provides a single, most typical or representative score which characterises the

performance of the entire group. The most familiar of these measures is the average, more technically known as the **mean**. This is found by adding all scores and dividing the sum by the number of cases (N) (Leedy 1974). Another measure of central tendency is the **median**, or middlemost score when all scores have been arranged in order of size. The median is the point that bisects the distribution, half the cases falling above it and half below (Anastasi 1982).

Once one has decided on a measure of central tendency and found the most typical score, certain reservations must be borne in mind in interpreting it.

Suppose a test to measure reading speed is given to two different classes and they both prove to have the same mean score. That does not mean that the two classes are really the same. The variability among the scores, how they spread out from the central point, may be quite different in the two groups. The most frequently used **measure of variability** is the **standard deviation** (Hatch and Farhady 1982:57).

> It is standard in the sense that it looks at the average variability of all the scores around the mean; all the scores are taken into account. The larger the standard deviation, the more variability from the central point of distribution. The smaller the standard deviation, the closer the distribution is to the central point.

Statistics needs a point of origin from which to make further measurements. This is usually derived from one of the parameters of the data, usually the mean, which establishes the precise pivot for the mass of the data. Once the mean is established, further measurement of the data can be undertaken, the purpose being to learn more about the data, discern their characteristics and identify their quality.

One measure which is used in statistical methods is the **range**. It measures merely the **overall spread** of the data from its lowest to its highest value. This is the entire data value spectrum. However, the range has limited usefulness as a measure of dispersion and may even be misleading if the extreme upper and lower limits are inordinately out of line with the other values of the series (Leedy 1974:132).

The next measure of dispersion is the **quartile deviation**. Leedy (1974:32) describes it as follows:

> The quartile deviation divides the data into four equal parts. Quartile 1 will lie at a point where 25 per cent of the items lie within the first quadrant of the

data **(Upper Quartile)**. Quartile 2 will divide the items into two equal parts and will be identical with the median. Quartile 3 will lie at a point where 75 per cent of the values are below it **(Lower Quartile)**.

It is argued that the quartile range is important in several ways, one of which is to provide a means of measuring **skewness**, and because the quartiles are associated with the median, any statistical approach employing the median as a measure of central tendency should also consider the quartile deviation as an appropriate statistical measure of variability (Leedy 1974).

Thus far it would seem that the mean and the standard deviation were common attributes of all data. This is not universally so. Not all data are parametric in character. Sometimes the data looks more like a stairway than a bell-shaped curve. In a ranked situation of this kind, a statistical system based upon the assumption of normal distributions, of means, and of standard deviations is not applicable (Leedy 1974).

Data with such characteristics as described above demand a statistical methodology which will recognise the particular characteristics of the data and provide specialised approaches which will take these singular characteristics into account. Such a methodology is found in the non-parametric statistical techniques. The system of nonparametric statistics is not concerned with parameters nor the form of the distribution underlying the data.

The most commonly used nonparametric test is the **chi-square** (x^2) test. Chi-square is used to determine whether a **certain distribution** differs from some predetermined **theoretical distribution** (Downie and Heath 1974). It is almost invariably used in casual comparative studies. It is employed in testing the mathematical fit **(goodness of fit)** of a frequency curve to an observed frequency distribution. Chi-square is applicable when there are two variables from independent samples, each of which is categorised in two ways. Of all the nonparametric tools, x^2 is probably the most important. More detail is provided by Leedy (1974), Downie and Heath (1974), Johnson (1977) Mulder (1982) Anastasi (1982) and Hatch and Farhady (1982).

6.4 Distribution of pupils according to selected variables

A total of 159 out of 193 pupils, 126 Higher Grade, and 33 Standard Grade, who were doing Xhosa as a subject for Senior Certificate at the various schools under the Cape Department of Education in the three areas covered, were tested in this study. Therefore an almost full sample (82,38%) of the total number of pupils taking Xhosa at Senior Certificate level during 1985 was incorporated in the study. Only those schools identified by the Department were involved. At some schools visited there were pupils who could not be tested because they were

not present on the day on which the test was administered. The total percentage of pupils not tested was 17,62% of the population, and that of the schools not visited was 18,72% of all the schools which offered Xhosa during 1985. Therefore the sample applied in this study is a highly representative one.

The following table shows the area, the school and the number of pupils per school covered in the study.

Since there was a small number of pupils in terms of percentages but a large number of schools per area, the analysis will concentrate on the total sample as well as the percentage of pupils per area.

Table 8 shows the number of pupils who took Xhosa as a subject at Senior Certificate level in the Cape Province. The table also shows the number as well as percentages of pupils per school who were tested. (Those not tested in each school are inferred.)

TABLE 8 THE NUMBER OF PUPILS TESTED PER SCHOOL

AREA	SCHOOL	NO OF PUPILS TESTED	% OF N TESTED	TOTAL PUPILS PER SCHOOL TAKING XHOSA FOR SENIOR CERTIFICATE	PERCENTAGE PER SCHOOL OF PUPILS TAKING XHOSA FOR SENIOR CERTIFICATE IN THE CAPE PROVINCE
W-CAPE	1	7	4,4	8	4,1
	2	7	4,4	7	3,6
	3	12	7,6	12	6,2
	4	1	0,6	3	1,6
	5	2	1,3	2	1,0
	6	3	1,9	3	1,6
	7	4	2,5	4	2,1
	8	11	6,9	11	5,7
	9	8	5,0	9	4,7
	10	6	3,8	6	3,1
	11	3	1,9	3	1,5
	12	19	11,9	19	9,8
	13	4	2,5	4	2,1
	14	4	2,5	4	2,1
PE./ UIT.	15	10	6,3	12	6,2
	16	4	2,5	4	2,1
	17	6	3,8	6	3,1
	18	3	1,9	3	1,6
	19	6	3,8	7	3,6
	20	4	2,5	4	2,1
	21	6	3,8	6	3,1
	22	5	3,1	5	2,6
	23	0	0	2	1,0
	24	0	0	10	5,2
	25	0	0	4	2,1
BORDER	26	8	5,0	8	4,1
	27	7	4,4	7	3,6
	28	6	3,8	6	3,1
	29	3	1,9	3	1,6
	30	0	0	1	0,5
	31	0	0	9	4,7
	32	0	0	1	0,5
TOTAL		159	100	193	100

The following table shows the number of pupils tested. They have been classified according to the area they come from, namely Western Cape (Area 1), Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage (Area 2) and Border (Area 3). They are also divided according to sex, home language and grade.

TABLE 9 PUPILS ACCORDING TO SELECTED VARIABLES (SUMMARY TABLE)

VARIABLE		NO OF PUPILS	PERCENTAGE
AREA	1	91	57,2
	2	44	27,7
	3	24	15,1
TOTAL		159	100,0
SEX	MALE	70	44,0
	FEMALE	89	56,0
TOTAL		159	100,0
HOME LANGUAGE	AFRIKAANS	57	35,8
	ENGLISH	97	61,0
	OTHER	5	3,2
TOTAL		159	100,0
GRADE	HIGHER	126	79,2
	STANDARD	33	20,8
TOTAL		159	100,0

The figures presented in Table 9 show that more than half of the pupils were from the Western Cape. Furthermore, 56% of the pupils were female and 61% were English-speaking. Nearly 80% of all the pupils studied Xhosa on the higher grade.

6.5 Evaluation of test scores

The following table indicates the overall scores obtained by the pupils regardless of area, sex, home language or grade. These scores have been categorised according to intervals. Each interval is represented by a specific aggregate symbol. These aggregate symbols are those used by the Cape Department of Education.

TABLE 10.1 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF TEST SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS IN XHOSA AS A SUBJECT AT SENIOR CERTIFICATE. (SCORES ARE CLASSIFIED INTO AGGREGATE SYMBOLS, i.e. AT INTERVALS.)

TEST* SYMBOL % RANGE	LISTEN-ING		FUNC-TIONS		NOTIONS		FREE CONVER-SATION		TOTAL TEST	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A 80 -100	41	25,79	10	6,29	15	9,43	2	1,26	11	6,92
B 70 - 79	17	10,69	13	8,18	13	8,18	10	6,29	11	6,92
C 60 - 69	24	15,09	29	18,24	25	15,72	21	13,20	22	13,84
D 50 - 59	41	25,79	17	10,69	13	8,18	31	19,50	36	22,64
E 40 - 49	18	11,32	20	12,58	8	5,03	65	40,88	26	16,35
F $33\frac{1}{3}$-39	11	6,92	16	10,06	27	16,98	22	13,84	27	16,98
FF30 - 33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	7,54
G 20 - 29	4	2,52	18	11,32	21	13,21	7	4,41	12	7,55
H Below20	3	1,88	36	22,64	37	23,27	1	0,62	2	1,26
TOTAL	159	100,0	159	100,0	159	100,0	159	100,0	159	100,0

*The test battery comprises four subsections: a listening comprehension, a subtest to evaluate a linguistic category called functions, another subtest to evaluate language notions and finally a subtest to test pupils' capability to converse freely in Xhosa given a specific topic. The sum total of scores obtained by each pupil in the different subtests have been added together and a mark has been allocated to represent an overall score for the total test.

In Table 10.2 mean and distribution values of scores obtained by all the pupils in respect of each section of the communicative test as well as the total average score of the four subtests added together are shown.

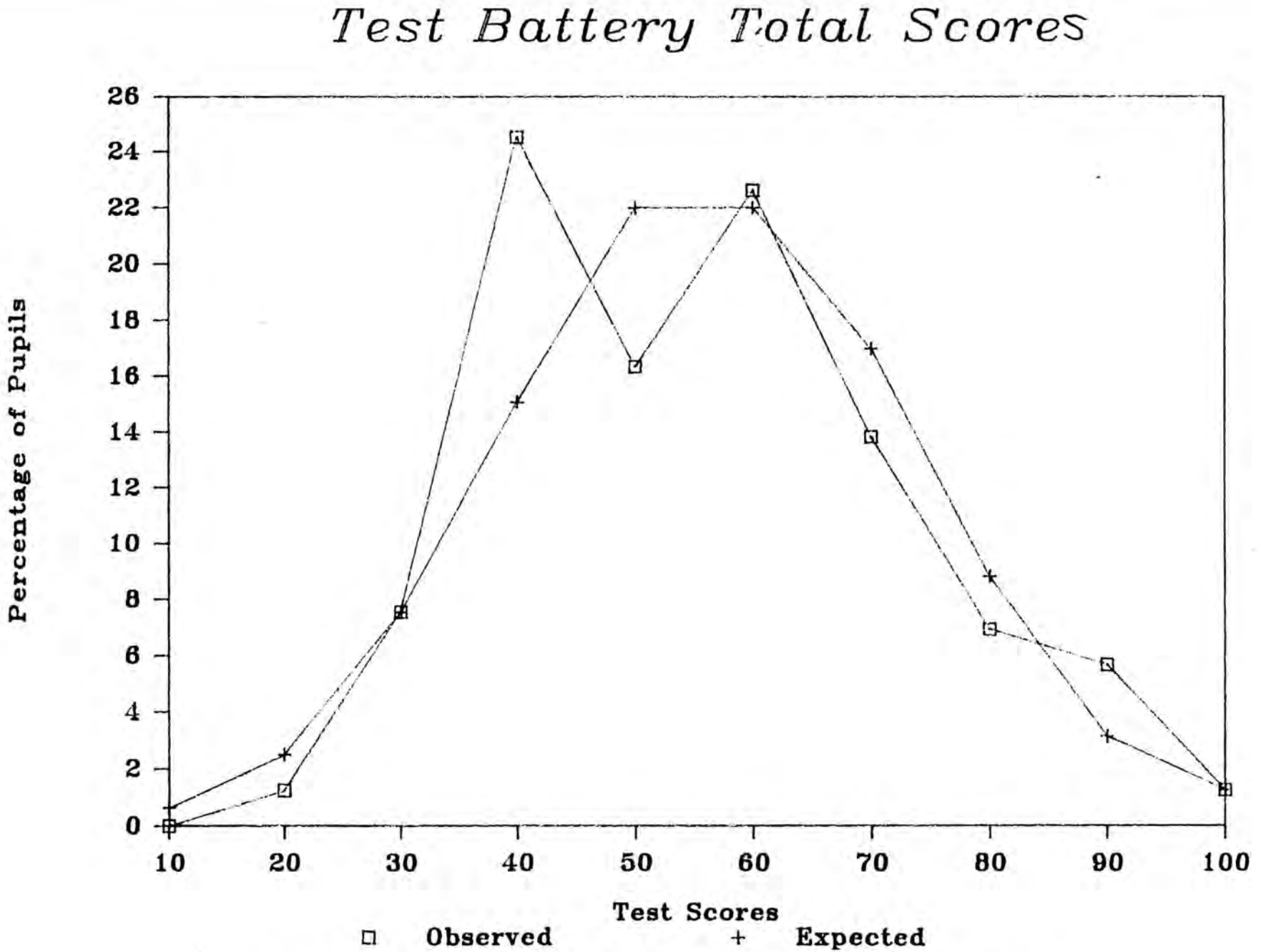
TABLE 10.2 MEAN AND DISTRIBUTIONVALUES IN RESPECT OF SCORES OBTAINED BY ALL THE PUPILS FOR THE SUBTESTS ON LISTENING COMPREHENSION, LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS, LANGUAGE NOTIONS AND UNSTRUCTURED FREE CONVERSATION AS WELL AS THE SUM TOTAL OF THE TEST BATTERY.

TEST VALUES	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
MEAN	63,3	42,2	42,2	52,1	50,1
STANDARD DEVIATION	21,0	23,5	25,5	12,7	17,0
MEDIAN	66,0	42,0	33,0	50,0	48,5
MODE	55,8	16,7	17,0	45,6	36,8
LOWER QUARTILE	50,0	25,0	25,0	45,0	31,4
UPPER QUARTILE	83,0	58,0	58,0	60,0	73,2

6.5.1 Total score

In considering the above groups of scores in terms of a measure for central tendency it is noted that the mean is 50,1, the median is 48,5 and the mode is 36,8. The mean scores and the median scores are nearly identical, which suggests a symmetrical distribution. It may also be observed that mode scores deviate strongly from the mean and the median. This means that the distribution leans towards the left i.e. towards lower scores.

A study of the distribution reveals that the standard deviation is 17,0. This indicates that scores are relatively strongly clustered around the mean. There are no extremes. Graph 1 confirms this impression but a "dip" occurs in the middle range of the distribution. There are two concentrations, one toward the left and one toward the right.



GRAPH 1: DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR THE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS FOR TEST BATTERY - OBSERVED AND EXPECTED SCORES.

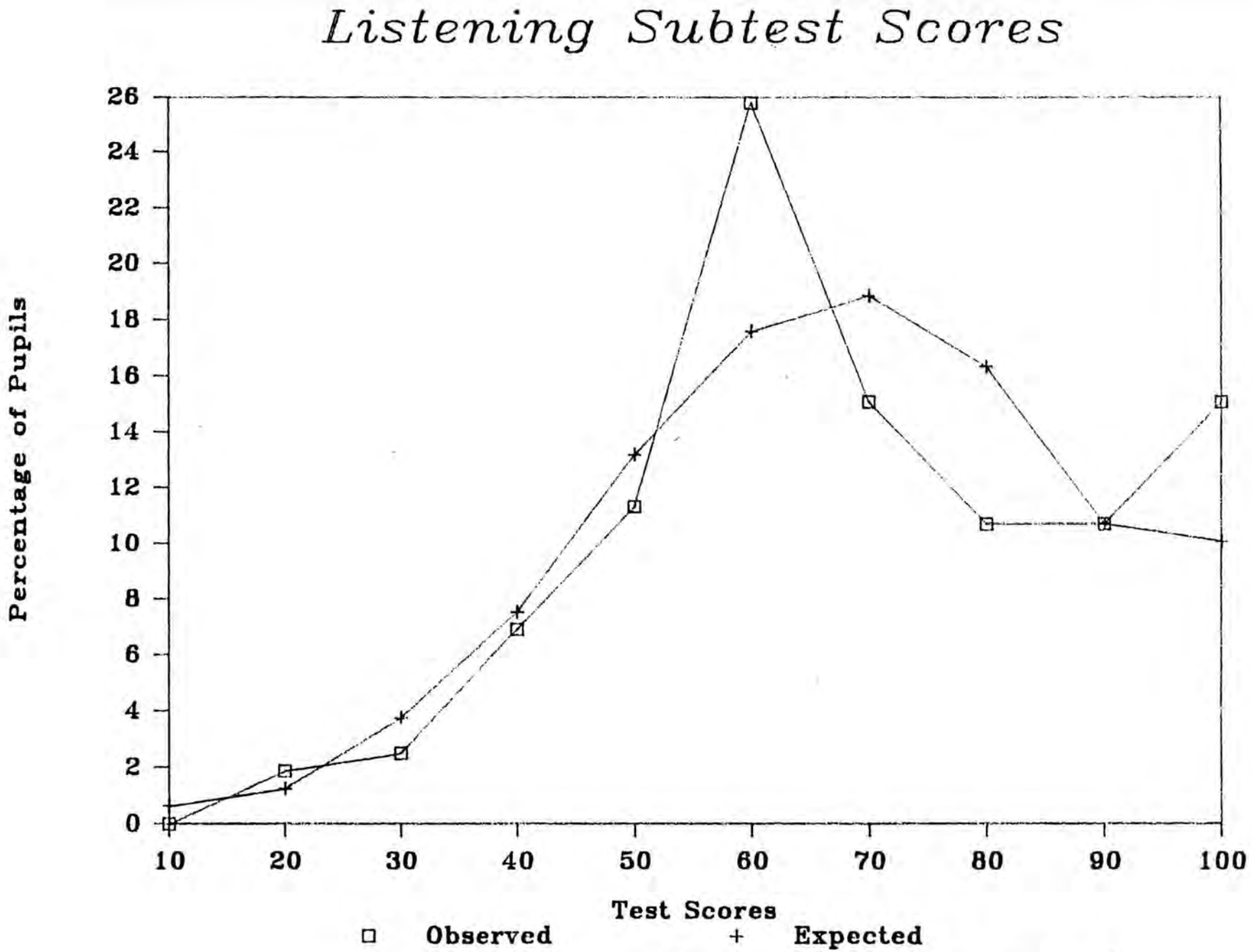
The following table (Table 10.3) shows a summary of test score values at intervals as well as expected and observed frequencies. This is a summary of the test score values for each subsection of the Xhosa communicative test and the average score obtained for the test battery. The frequency distribution has also been presented graphically in the form of a distribution curve for the subtests (see Graphs 1-5). This has been done to add interest in the presentation of data. It has also been done to capture the reader's attention and to make the data easier to understand.

Each of the subtests has been represented by a frequency polygon in which all the midpoints of the intervals are demarcated.

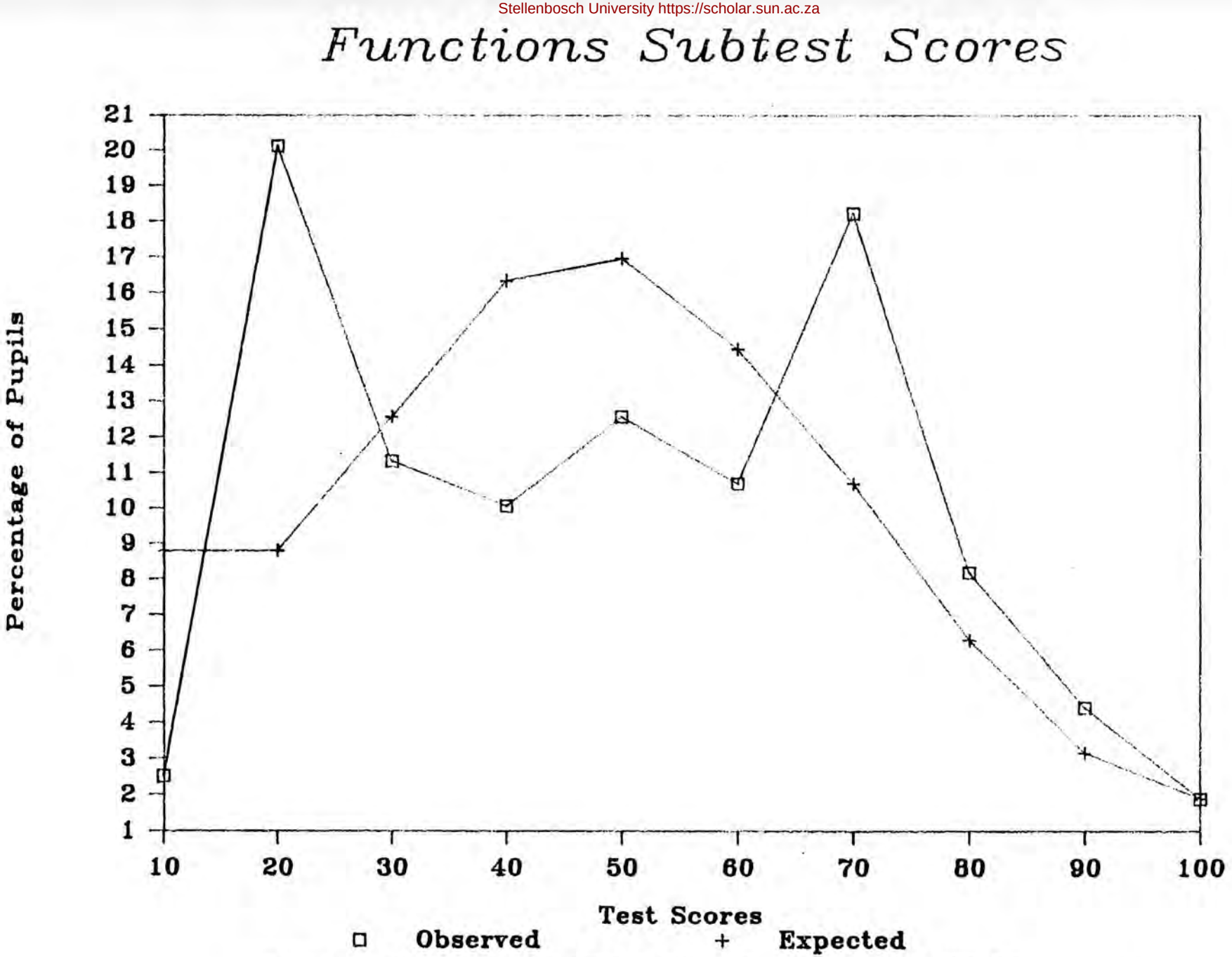
TABLE 10.3 SUMMARY OF TEST SCORE VALUES - EXPECTED AND OBSERVED FREQUENCIES IN RESPECT OF ALL THE SUBTESTS AS WELL AS TOTAL SCORE OBTAINED IN THE TEST BATTERY.

PERCENTAGE RANGE	TOTAL TEST		LISTENING		FUNCTIONS		NOTIONS		FREE CONVERSATION	
	Exp.	Obs.	Exp.	Obs.	Exp.	Obs.	Exp.	Obs.	Exp.	Obs
0- 9	1	0	1	0	14	4	16	3	0	0
10-19	4	2	2	3	14	32	14	34	1	1
20-29	12	12	6	4	20	18	20	21	5	7
30-39	24	39	12	11	26	16	24	27	19	22
40-49	35	26	21	18	27	20	24	8	40	65
50-59	35	36	28	41	23	17	22	13	48	31
60-69	27	22	30	24	17	29	17	25	32	21
70-79	14	11	26	17	10	13	11	13	12	10
80-89	5	9	17	17	5	7	6	4	2	2
90-99 (100)	2	2	16	24	3	3	5	11	0	0
N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
				PERCENTAGE						
MEAN	-	50,1	-	63,3	-	42,2	-	42,4	-	52,1
S D	-	17,0	-	21,0	-	23,5	-	25,5	-	12,7
MEDIAN	51,0	48,5	63,2	66,0	42,0	42,0	42,3	33,0	53,0	50,0
MODE	50,0	36,8	63,3	55,8	42,0	16,7	40,0	17,0	53,3	45,6
L Q	39,5	31,4	48,9	50,0	25,9	25,0	24,9	25,0	43,7	45,0
H Q	63,1	73,2	77,4	83,0	57,9	58,0	59,7	58,0	62,0	60,0
				GOODNESS OF FIT*						
X^2obs	18,4866		55,54		47,8825		65,9024		27,0341	
X^2exp	12,59		14,07		15,51		16,92		11,07	
d.f.	6		7		8		9		5	
(P)	0,05		0,05		0,05		0,05		0,05	
Normality	Fairly		Fairly		Not		Not		Not	

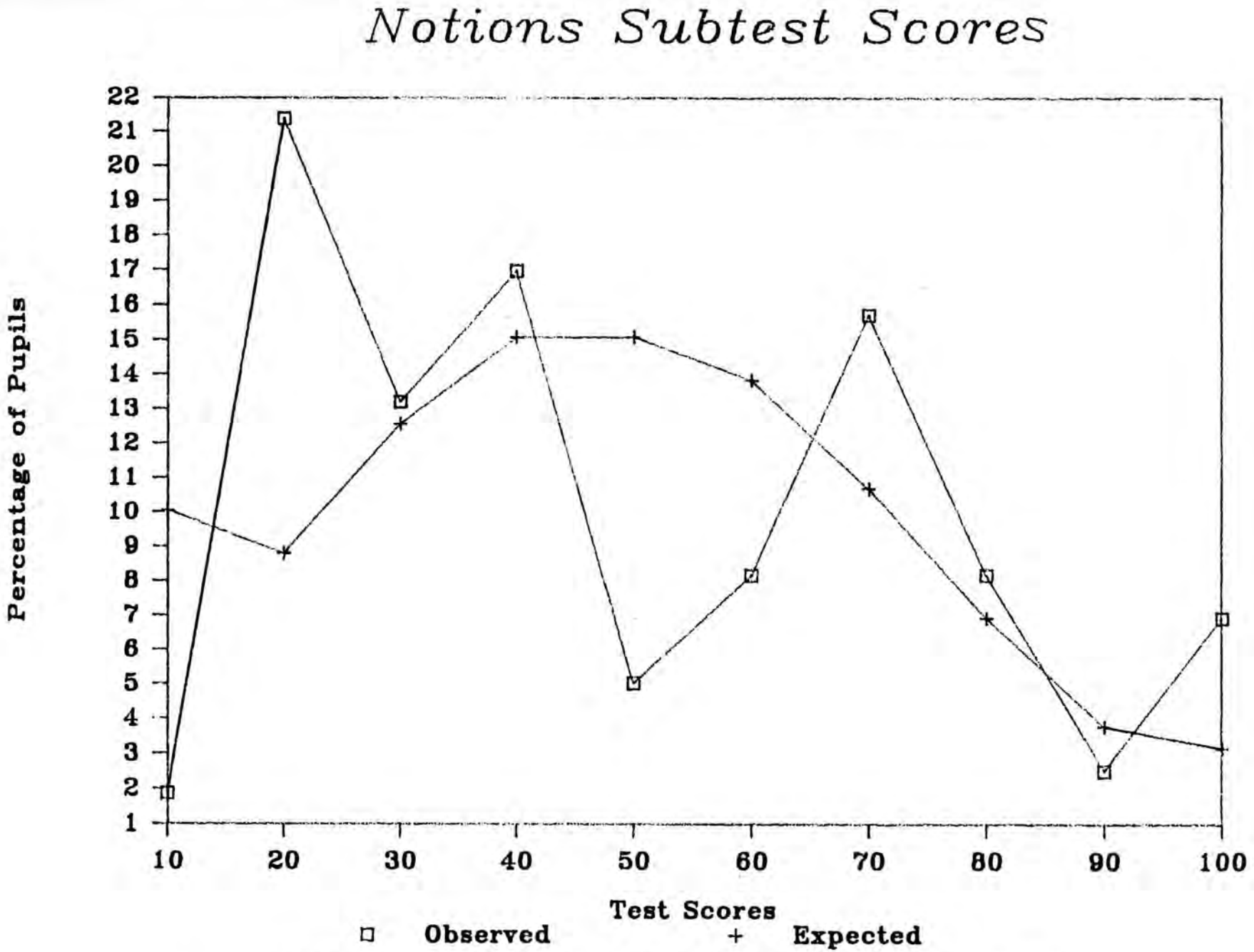
*Following: D.E.W., Schumann + B.Bouwer: Inleiding tot die statistiek, pp. 178-180, 247-248.



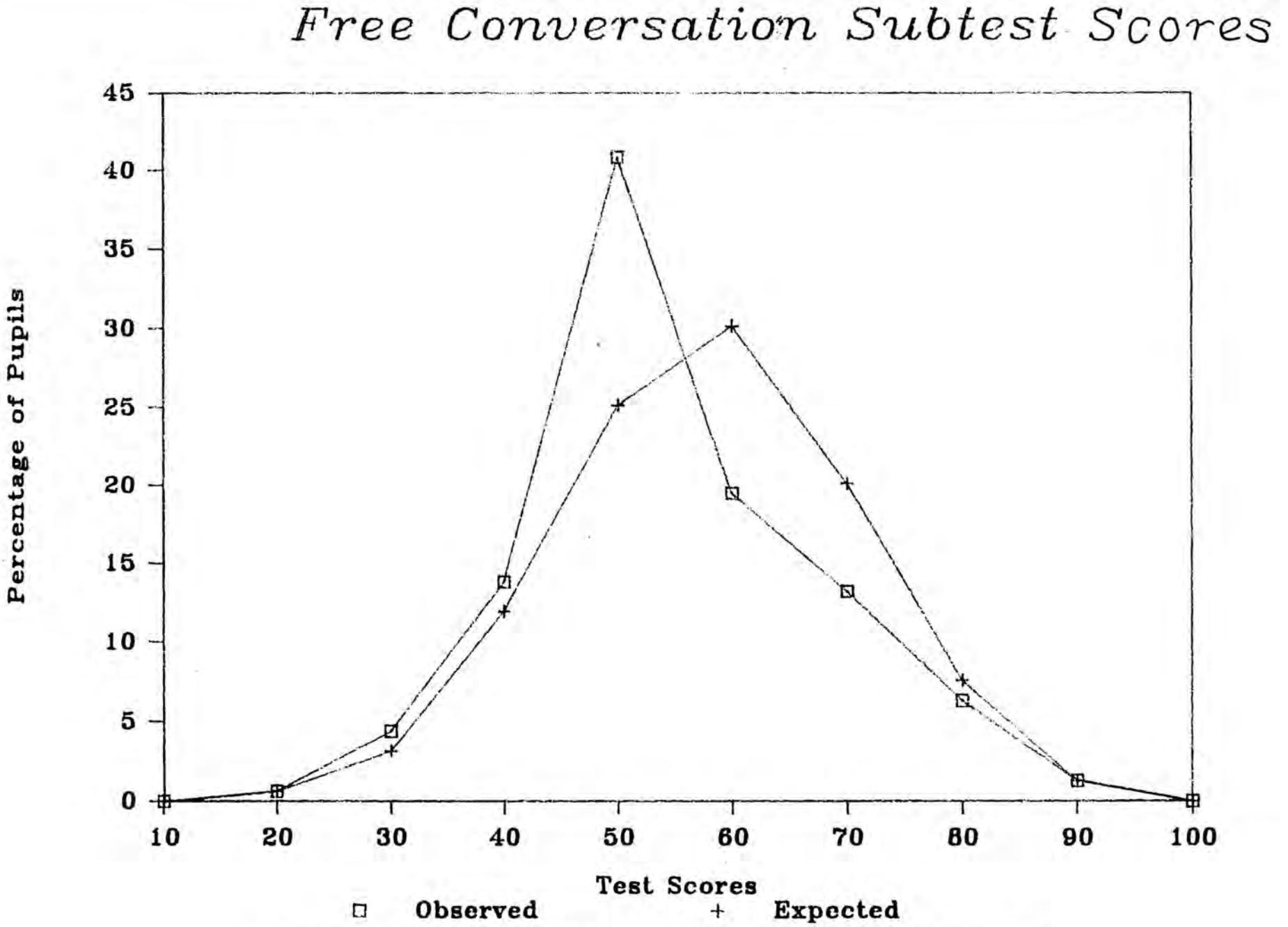
GRAPH 2: DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR THE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS FOR LISTENING SUBTEST - OBSERVED AND EXPECTED SCORES.



GRAPH 3: DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR THE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS FOR FUNCTIONS SUBTEST - OBSERVED AND EXPECTED SCORES.



GRAPH 4: DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR THE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS FOR NOTIONS SUBTEST - OBSERVED AND EXPECTED SCORES.



GRAPH 5: DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR THE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS FOR FREE CONVERSATION SUBTEST - OBSERVED AND EXPECTED SCORES

Table 10.3 and Graphs 1-5 suggest a deviation from normal distribution of scores (see + signs on all graphs showing a normal distribution) between the observed chi-square (X^2) = 12,59 with observed degrees of freedom dif. = 6. But this is still within the standard deviation. The strongest deviations occur in the

30 - 39 interval: more pupils than expected appear
40 - 49 interval: fewer pupils than expected appear
probably favouring the 30 - 39 category
80 - 89 interval: more pupils than expected appear.

Comparisons between central values for the observed distribution and the expected distribution suggest that the test is more strict than would be expected. All observed values for centrality are lower than expected values.

Comparisons on lowest quartile confirm the above. The observed lowest quartile is lower than the expected lowest quartile.

On the other hand, the test favours pupils with higher scores. The discrepancy on the 80-89 interval indicates this. Also the observed highest quartile is higher than the expected highest quartile.

Conclusion: In conclusion it can be said that the test may be regarded as fairly strict in measuring language proficiency for the majority of pupils but that it does not set insurmountable criteria for those pupils with a high level of language proficiency to perform extremely well. The test succeeds in discriminating between highly proficient pupils and those of average proficiency. It is less successful in discriminating between pupils of low and average proficiency.

6.5.2 Subsections of Xhosa communicative test

Strong variations can be observed among subsections with regard to centrality and distribution of scores of pupils. On average, the **listening** subtest elicited high central scores, the **free conversation** subtest medium scores and the subtests on **functions** and **notions** low scores. The mode is noticeably lower than the mean and median in all these cases. This suggests that the majority of pupils found all subsections more difficult than was expected. Highly proficient pupils scored better than expected in the **listening** subtest but not in other subtests. In the **free conversation** subtest, they scored even lower than expected.

Listening distribution is fairly normal but skewed to the right, i.e. higher scores. (X^2 = 15,54 14,07 with d.f. = 7; = 0,05). Graph 2 shows an increase in the 90-99 (100) interval; more pupils than expected fell into this category. In the 70-79 interval there were fewer pupils than expected, probably favouring the higher categories. There were substantially more pupils than expected in the 50-59 interval.

Graphs for subtests on **functions** and **notions** suggest strong deviations from normal distribution. (Functions: X^2 = 47,8825 15,51 with d.f. = 8; = 0,05; Notions: X^2 = 65,9024 16,92 with d.f. = 9; = 0.05).

Comparisons between observed and expected frequencies in both cases confirm deviations from normality. Central scores indicate low proficiency in the observations; expected scores, although higher than observed, confirm this view. The large variation in scores as indicated by relatively high standard deviations in all cases (also with regard to **listening**), suggest high frequencies of pupils on the extremes of the rating scale. Modes for **functions** and **notions** subtests suggest very low average frequencies.

The graph on the **free conversation** subtest indicates a narrow distribution with a sharp peak. This is confirmed by its low standard deviation. The distribution deviates from normality (X^2 = 27,0341 11,07 with d.f. = 5; = 0,05) especially in 40-49 interval, with substantially more pupils observed than expected, and in the 50-59 and 60-69 intervals, with substantially fewer pupils than expected.

6.5.3 Conclusion

Observed scores on all subsections of the test indicate that:

- listening is fairly well developed
- functions and notions are underdeveloped (notions worst of all)
- free conversation is of average level.

Expected scores indicate that:

- the listening subtest is very optimistic in its evaluation of proficiency
- the functions subtest is a realistic evaluation of proficiency
- the notions subtest is too pessimistic in the evaluation of proficiency
- the free conversation subtest is too pessimistic in its evaluation of proficiency

All in all the **test battery** seems to be a fair representation of all elements of proficiency, if taken as a combined result, but the test overall seems to have been applied strictly.

6.6 Differences in scores according to selected variables

6.6.1 Area

In paragraph 6.2.4 it was suggested that it is possible that in an area where the majority of the population speak the target language, this may have a positive influence on the acquisition of that language. It was also argued that exposure to the target language is a major factor in the effective learning of a language.

Arising from these postulations, the question was asked to what extent pupils from areas where Xhosa is a dominant language will gain higher scores than those from areas where the target language is not a dominant language. These were pupils who were located in Port Elizabeth - Uitenhage and Border, in relation to those who were in the Western Cape.

Since area is associated with language exposure in this study, it will be retained as a constant variable. It is regarded as an extraneous factor. However, it is argued that if area is indeed a major factor in the acquisition of Xhosa by pupils, it will override all the other variables, sex, home language and grade.

As stated earlier, the present study was conducted in three areas, Western Cape, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border (referred to as areas 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

The following table shows the population figures in these areas.

TABLE 11 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF THE WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER BASED ON POPULATION CENSUS OF 1985*

POPULATION	WESTERN CAPE		PE - UITENHAGE		BORDER	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Blacks	255,152	8,22	300,019	46,00	364,385	76,86
Whites	435,860	14,04	173,902	26,67	77,905	16,43
Coloureds	2398,489	77,28	170,790	26,19	29,018	6,12
Asians	14,366	0,46	7,415	1,14	2,791	0,59
TOTAL	3103,867	100,0	652,126	100,0	474,099	100,0

*Based on figures supplied by Statistiese Nuusberig (1985) and Graaff (1986).

Table 11 above indicates that in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border areas, the majority of people in each are black: 46,0% and 76,86% respectively. In the Western Cape, blacks are in the minority (8,22%). If it is true that in an area where the majority of the population speak the target language, this may be a contributing factor in effective language learning of the target language, it can be expected that pupils learning Xhosa located in Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border may gain higher scores than those who are in the Western Cape.

There are a number of possible hypotheses in social statistics to reflect these expectations However, the common hypothesis is the **null hypothesis** which states that there is no difference between the above-mentioned groups. If there is strong evidence that leads one to expect not only a difference but also the direction of that difference one may use the **directional hypothesis** (one-tailed testing). In other words, it is used to reject the null hypothesis. If it is successful in rejecting the null hypothesis, an alternative hypothesis has to be supported, the hypothesis of difference. The probability level chosen to reject the null hypothesis is called the **level of significance**. The results of the various groups are compared statistically to see whether there are indeed significant differences between the groups, by which is meant a more than ,025 per cent differential over the other group. The t-test is the most widely used statistical test for the above type of comparison. For this reason, it has been used in the present study.

In the following discussion an attempt will be made to answer the question to what extent Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border pupils differ from those in the Western Cape in respect of scores gained in the Xhosa communicative test.

In the following tables the average percentage scores obtained by pupils in each of the areas are shown, as well as calculated differences between the three groups.

TABLE 12.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO AREA OF PUPILS DOING XHOSA FOR SENIOR CERTIFICATE IN THREE AREAS, NAMELY WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER

AREA TEST	WESTERN CAPE N=91	P/E UITENHAGE N=44	BORDER N=24
LISTENING	60,2	67,2	68,1
FUNCTIONS	40,5	44,9	43,6
NOTIONS	38,3	48,1	47,1
FREE CONVERSATION	52,5	49,5	55,0
TOTAL TEST	48,5	51,7	53,6

TABLE 12.2 STATISTICALLY CALCULATED DIFFERENCES IN SCORES IN AREAS ACCORDING TO P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TEST AREA	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL N=159
1-2	0,034	0,150	0,017*	0,099	0,146
1-3	0,037	0,275	0,053	0,170	0,070
2-3	0,440	0,417	0,444	0,076	0,354
1-2+3	0,017*	0,153	0,012*	0,314	0,084
2-1+3	0,099	0,188	0,058	0,090	0,265
3-1+2	0,116	0,384	0,173	0,126	0,154

*significant at p__ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 12.2 shows comparisons based on t-test measures of significance of difference between means. These comparisons seem to indicate that area did not have a great influence on second language acquisition. There appears to be no significant difference between scores obtained by pupils in the Western Cape and those in Port Elizabeth - Uitenhage and Border. The non-existence of this influence is shown when comparisons are made on total mean scores of test for all possible combinations of comparisons. When sub-sections of the test are considered, statistically significant differences are observed in the cases of the tests on listening comprehension and language notions.

From these observations it seems that the area where the pupil is schooled does not make any statistically significant difference in his/her overall score in the test. There is however a significant difference with regard to listening comprehension and notions.

6.6.2 Sex

A literature survey has indicated that females tend to obtain higher scores than males in languages. It will now be established how valid the above contention is in a situation where Xhosa is learnt. The following tables show average percentage scores obtained in respect of sex by pupils doing Xhosa for Senior Certificate under the Cape Department of Education as well as differences in these scores between females and males.

TABLE 13.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO SEX AS OBTAINED BY PUPILS DOING XHOSA FOR SENIOR CERTIFICATE UNDER THE CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TEST	FEMALES N=89	MALES N=70
Listening	65,6	60,4
Functions	45,3	38,3
Notions	44,5	39,6
Free Conversation	54,5	49,0
Total test	52,7	46,9

TABLE 13.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES ACCORDING TO SEX, OBTAINED BY PUPILS DOING XHOSA FOR SENIOR CERTIFICATE UNDER THE CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

SEX	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
MALE/ FEMALE	0,059	0,032	0,114	0,003*	0,014*

*significant at p __ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 13.1 shows that females obtained higher average percentage scores when scores of the whole test battery were combined and also when individual scores of subsections of the test were observed. When differences were calculated as in Table 13.2, a statistically significant difference was observed in respect of scores obtained in the combined scores and also in the subtest on unstructured free conversation.

The difference observed in respect of the section on free conversation and also on combined scores of the test battery is important, since more marks (35,8%) were allocated to free conversation than the other three remaining sections of the test battery, the subtests on listening comprehension, language functions and language notions, each being allocated 21,4%.

The subtest on free conversation is important in another respect. To perform well in it one has to be competent in language functions as well as in language notions, which are both important in the language communication process.

From the above observations it appears that findings based on a literature survey that sex influences second language acquisition may be valid and that they relate to the present study as well. This is supported by the fact that there was a statistically significant difference between the performance of females and males in important sections of the Xhosa communicative test.

6.6.3 Home language

In paragraph 6.2.2 it was argued that it is possible that there may be a difference between the scores obtained by English and Afrikaans pupils doing Xhosa for Senior Certificate under the Cape Department of Education.

The following tables indicate average percentage scores obtained by English-speaking pupils and Afrikaans-speaking pupils as well as differences in scores between the two language groups.

TABLE 14.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO HOME LANGUAGE OBTAINED BY AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING PUPILS DOING XHOSA IN THE CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.*

TEST	AFRIKAANS N=57	ENGLISH N=97
Listening	55,5	67,1
Functions	35,6	45,5
Notions	32,1	47,5
Free Conversation	47,1	54,8
Total test	43,3	53,6

TABLE 14.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES ACCORDING TO HOME LANGUAGE, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

HOME LANGUAGE	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVERS.	TOTAL TEST
Afrikaans-English	0,000*	0,005*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

*Five testees were discarded because they represented a small group of pupils who spoke other languages, namely, Portuguese, German and Dutch.

Tables 14.1 and 14.2 show that some of the reasons presented in paragraph 6.2.2 favouring English-speaking pupils may be true because average percentage scores obtained by English- speaking pupils were greater than those obtained by those whose mother tongue was Afrikaans. The differences between the two population groups were statistically significant in all the subsections of the test.

6.6.4 Grades

Earlier on (see 6.2.3), it was postulated that it is possible that pupils doing Xhosa Higher Grade may perform better than those doing Xhosa Standard Grade. This assumption was based on the likelihood of higher academic ability.

The following tables show average percentage scores obtained by pupils in the Higher Grade and the Standard Grade as well as differences in these scores.

TABLE 15.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO GRADES

TEST	HIGHER GRADE N=126	STANDARD GRADE N=33
Listening	62,8	65,4
Functions	44,2	34,6
Notions	42,9	40,4
Free Conversation	52,8	49,1
Total test	50,9	47,2

TABLE 15.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES ACCORDING TO GRADES, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

GRADES	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVERSATION	TOTAL TEST
Higher-Standard	0,267	0,018*	0,312	0,060	0,123

*significant at p_ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 15.1 indicates that scores obtained by both pupils doing Higher Grade and Standard Grade did not differ significantly except in respect of the subsection on language functions.

In Table 15.2 the supposition that pupils studying Xhosa on the Higher Grade may perform better than those doing it on the Standard Grade is largely refuted. It is noted however, that there is a statistically significant difference with regard to language functions. Pupils in the Higher Grade may have found language functions easier, or perhaps there was more attention paid to them in class in the Higher Grade. It is also possible that pupils in the Standard Grade may have found the language functions difficult to understand.

6.6.5 Summary

The following pattern emerged. When average percentage scores obtained by pupils in the three areas of the Western Cape, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border were compared with one another, the area where the pupil was schooled did not make any statistically significant difference to his overall score in the test. A difference was, however, noticed with regard to listening comprehension and notions.

There was a statistically significant difference in the performance of females and males in important sections of the Xhosa communicative test.

Average percentage scores obtained by English-speaking pupils were higher than those obtained by Afrikaans-speaking pupils. There were statistically significant differences in all the subsections as well as the total score.

Scores obtained by pupils both on the Higher Grade and Standard Grade did not differ significantly except in the subsection on functions. Grade does not make any statistically significant difference in the overall score in the test.

6.7 Language exposure

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that language exposure is an important aspect of language learning. Several levels of language input can be discerned in language learning. The language classroom, for example, provides a specialised kind of exposure to the target language. Encountering the language through books or through the environment is another form of exposure. Language exposure is an important way of improving proficiency by increasing the learner's experience with forms and meanings that can be incorporated into his own use of the language. Since exposure does not necessarily highlight new forms or meanings, these are likely to be implicitly acquired and may be used by the learner to form his own responses in the target language (Bialystok 1978).

Since formal instruction, because of time constraints, does not allow much practice of new language concepts, additional practice is necessary if the learner is completely to acquire and retain the feature system of a new language concept. This practice has to be acquired outside of formal instruction but will perhaps be built on what is acquired within a formal instructional framework.

It sometimes happens that some learners, for certain reasons, are able to exploit formal learning environments for extensive practice while others derive only limited benefit from formal instruction. The more one practises, the greater the level of competence.

Seliger (1977:275) states that the term exposure is neutral. He points out that being exposed to language is not like being exposed to a virus. One does not catch it automatically. Seliger (1977) notes that children seem to catch a first language automatically, but one can hardly imagine a normal child retreating from language interaction.

Seliger (1977:274-275) classifies learners into two main types.

> Active learners who utilise all language environments, both formal and natural, for practice by interacting and getting others to use language with them are termed high input generators. The end result of their behaviour is a competence which develops at a faster and perhaps qualitatively better rate. By getting more focused input, the high input generator is able to test more hypotheses about the shape and use of the second language. Passive learners who do not exploit practice opportunities and retreat from interaction are termed low input generators. This type of learner will avoid intensive contact with the second language. For this reason, the low input generator is heavily dependent on language learning environments such as the classroom which are artificially contrived to force him into contact with the second language.

Because of the limitations of formal learning environments, the low input generator will receive a limited amount of focused input and will not seek out additional practice opportunities when left to his own devices. This avoidance behaviour affects the rate of second language achievement.

The conclusion based on the results of Seliger's study was that high input generators will benefit from instruction because they are maturationally able to do so. However, they will also exploit other practice opportunities beyond what is presented formally. Low input generators on the other hand, do not interact intensively in language classes or outside of language classes. While they too are maturationally capable of benefitting from formal instruction, it appears that they are also dependent on it.

The above argument may be summarised as follows: The learning mechanism operates through its capacity to formulate rules about the language once the individual has been exposed to it. The essential condition is exposure to the language, and as long as this exposure continues the learning mechanism will operate. What is needed in language teaching, therefore, is adequate exposure to the target language (Wilkins 1972:172). The greater the exposure to meaningful language the more effectively the learner can formulate and revise the hypotheses about the structure of the language.

It was argued earlier on that if pupils are in areas where the majority of the population speak the target language, it is possible that the pupils will be highly exposed to the language and may acquire a high degree of oral proficiency in it. Area was associated with language exposure. However, this argument was not supported by the data.

6.7.1. Relationship between sex and oral proficiency controlled for area

A variable can be defined as an attribute of a person or an object which "varies" from person to person or from object to object (Hatch and Farhady 1982:12). For example, sex and language group are variables because they vary from person to person.

Variables can be classified as dependent, independent or moderator variables. It is also possible to have intervening and control variables as well. The independent variable is the subject of investigation. It is the variable which is selected, manipulated and measured.

The dependent variable, on the other hand, is the variable which is observed and measured to determine the effect of the independent variable.

A control variable is a variable which is held constant in order to neutralise the potential effect it might have on behaviour (Hatch and Farhady 1982:14). In determining differences between the various variables, up to now, two independent variables have been used in each

argument. However, this does not appear to have been enough. A deeper and more accurate understanding of two-variable relationships may be achieved by controlling one or more additional variables.

Area has been held constant as a control variable. The aim of this activity was to establish whether the pattern noticed in the behaviour of sex, home language and grade on the scores would persist. A control variable (area) was used constantly in order to neutralise the potential effect it might have on behaviour. Controlling this variable is important for a fuller, more precise understanding of the original relationship. The use of a control variable (area) is based on the premise that if area has indeed a great influence on oral achievement, there will be no difference in performance between Areas 2 and 3, females and males, Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking pupils, and between Xhosa Higher Grade and Xhosa Standard Grade. If there is low exposure, the relationships observed in paragraph 6.5 will remain, but where the exposure is high, the relationships are expected to disappear. Therefore intense exposure may result in spurious relationships.

Tables 16.1 and 16.2 show mean scores obtained in respect of sex as well as comparisons based on t-test measures of significance between means in the case of each of the three areas.

TABLE 16.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY FEMALES AND MALES IN THREE AREAS, WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER

AREA	SEX	N	LISTENING FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	Fem.	44	61,8	44,8	41,0	55,4	51,3
	Males	47	58,7	36,5	35,8	49,8	45,8
2	Fem.	26	67,3	44,0	45,9	51,2	52,0
	Males	18	67,2	46,3	51,4	47,2	51,3
3	Fem.	19	72,4	48,1	50,8	56,8	56,9
	Males	5	51,8	26,6	33,2	48,0	41,0

TABLE 16.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES OBTAINED BY FEMALES AND MALES IN THREE AREAS, WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

AREA	SEX	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	Females-Males	0,217	0,034	0,138	0,006*	0,032
2	Females-Males	0,395	0,393	0,270	0,207	0,455
3	Females-Males	0,055	0,074	0,152	0,155	0,092

*significant at p_ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

With regard to the relationship between sex and test results (total score) controlled for area, the following can be stated:

- a relationship between sex, free conversation and test results (total score) indicates that females gained higher scores than males (Table 13)

- when controlled for area, (Table 16) the relationship disappeared, i.e. within the various areas, females and males did not differ significantly in total score

This implies that area specifies the conditions that
neutralise the capacity of females to perform better in the Xhosa communicative test.

What are these conditions? On examining the relationship between area and test results (Table 12) no relationship was observed between area and total score; a relationship was however noticed between area and listening comprehension (better scores in areas 2 and 3 combined); and area and language notions (better scores in areas 2 and 3 combined).

Areas 2 and 3 combined thus resulted in increased proficiency in listening comprehension and language notions. This suggests that there was more exposure to the target language, and consequently more input.

It would appear that Areas 2 and 3 are conducive to input but Area 1 is not. This may be because there are more Xhosa-speaking people in Areas 2 and 3 than in Area 1.

It may be argued that when exposure is intense as is indicated in Table 16 the female capacity to learn Xhosa in the case of Areas 2 and 3 may be overridden. It may also be argued that males may be so intensely exposed to the target language that their capacity is on a par with that of the females. On the other hand, it may be argued that both groups become high input generators (Seliger 1977).

As far as Area 1 is concerned, it may be argued that although exposure to the language is minimal, female capacity to acquire Xhosa still functions strongly as is evident in the relationship between sex and free conversation, where females gained higher scores than males (Table 16).

It may be concluded, therefore, that conditions of exposure to the target language which appear to exist in Areas 2 and 3 are likely to have a strong effect on the learning of Xhosa. Because of the intensity of language exposure, they may render the relationship between sex and oral proficiency spurious. This may mean that the innate ability of females to perform better than males (as argued in para. 6.2.1) may not be the only crucial factor; exposure may also be of fundamental importance.

6.7.2 Relationship between home language and oral proficiency controlled for area

The relationship between home language and Xhosa test results was controlled for area.

Table 17.1 shows the average percentage scores obtained by Afrikaans-speaking pupils as well as English-speaking pupils in the three areas, Western Cape, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border. Table 17.2 indicates the differences in scores in areas obtained by English-speaking pupils and Afrikaans-speaking pupils.

TABLE 17.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING PUPILS AS WELL AS ENGLISH-SPEAKING PUPILS IN EACH OF THE THREE AREAS, WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER

AREA	HOME LAN-GUAGE	N	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	Afrikaans	24	57,3	38,0	33,3	49,3	45,5
	English	63	60,1	40,6	39,0	53,6	48,9
2	Afrikaans	20	53,2	33,8	31,1	42,4	40,4
	English	23	82,6	57,5	66,8	57,3	64,1
3	Afrikaans	10	56,8	34,0	31,6	52,5	44,9
	English	14	76,2	50,4	58,2	56,8	59,8

TABLE 17.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES ACCORDING TO HOME LANGUAGE IN WESTERN CAPE, PORT ELIZABETH-UITENHAGE AND BORDER, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

AREA	HOME LAN-GUAGE	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	English-Afrikaans	0,233	0,297	0,102	0,023*	0,124
2	English-Afrikaans	0,000*	0,000*	0,001*	0,000*	0,000*
3	English-Afrikaans	0,010*	0,054	0,005*	0,225	0,018*

*significant at percentage p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 14 shows that when the relationship between home language and oral proficiency was studied, English-speaking pupils obtained significantly higher scores than Afrikaans-speaking pupils in all the sections of the test battery.

However, when controlled for area (Table 17.2) the relationship was as follows:

- In Area 1 the difference was not significant except in the section of the test on free conversation
- In Area 2 the difference was significant in all the subtests.
- In Area 3 the difference was significant in respect of the sections of the test on listening comprehension, language notions and the average combined score of all the tests.

This suggests that area specifies conditions which may either neutralise or enhance conditions for English-speaking groups to perform better in Xhosa.

It may be argued that the amount of exposure to the target language experienced by both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking pupils may have been so small that it placed both groups on an equal level of performance, except in respect of free conversation. In area 1, these conditions were neutralised in the cases of listening, functions and notions.

They were also neutralised in Area 3 in the cases of functions and free conversation.

It would appear that listening comprehension and the acquiring of language functions and notions are important elements in language learning.

It would appear that Area 1 is not conducive to creating these conditions where most language elements for listening, functions and notions can be acquired by the two language groups. It would appear that Area 3 may lack conditions for increasing the capacity to acquire language functions and eventually free communication. It is also possible that pupils enjoy high exposure but are "low input generators".

It may be concluded that the seeming lack of exposure to the target language found in Area 1 and possibly in Area 3 (when the assumption of high and low input generators distinction is disregarded) may result in diminished performance in Xhosa for English-speaking pupils.

6.7.3 Relationship between grade and oral proficiency controlled for area

In the following discussion, the relationship between grade and Xhosa test results is controlled for area.

The following table shows the average percentage scores in areas obtained by pupils who take Xhosa on a Higher Grade and on the Standard Grade.

TABLE 18.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES IN AREAS OBTAINED BY PUPILS DOING XHOSA ON A HIGHER GRADE AND ON THE STANDARD GRADE

AREA	GRADE	N	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	Higher	81	61,5	43,4	40,5	53,0	50,0
	Standard	10	50,0	17,0	21,0	49,0	36,3
2	Higher	31	64,8	44,5	46,2	50,5	51,4
	Standard	13	73,0	46,2	52,7	47,3	52,5
3	Higher	14	66,2	48,0	49,3	57,5	55,4
	Standard	10	71,0	37,0	44,1	51,5	51,1

TABLE 18.2 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES IN AREAS OBTAINED BY PUPILS DOING XHOSA ON A HIGHER GRADE AND ON THE STANDARD GRADE, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

AREA	GRADES	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
1	Higher-Standard	0,051	0,000*	0,002*	0,043	0,000*
2	Higher-Standard	0,148	0,421	0,250	0,220	0,423
3	Higher-Standard	0,298	0,139	0,320	0,132	0,273

*significant at percentage _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 15 shows that when relationship between grade and test results were compared that Higher Grade pupils obtained significantly higher scores in the test on language functions.

In Table 18 when the relationship between grade and test results was controlled for area, Higher Grade pupils in Area 1 obtained significantly higher scores in the sections of the test on language functions and notions. The same pupils also showed a significantly higher score in the total score. In Areas 2 and 3 no significant relationship was gained in either of these two grades.

Possible reasons for the performance in Area 1 may relate to the fact that the majority of pupils who take Xhosa in the Western Cape are English speaking (72,4%), and that in the Higher Grade the majority of pupils are English-speaking (64,5%).

Since the test construction did not distinguish between grades no clear conclusion can be drawn. Items were selected in terms of frequency of occurrence only.

6.7.4 Conclusions

An analysis of the data shows that when considered as a control variable, area influences the performance of pupils. This implies that when pupils are exposed to the target language, they tend to perform better in the communicative test. Lack of exposure (as in Area 1) results in the equalising of that performance when compared in terms of sex and home language.

It has been noticed that performance in a target language is influenced by the sex of the pupils learning the language. This has been supported by the finding that females tend to perform significantly better than males in the communicative test.

The above scores also show that home language has an influence on the manner in which pupils performed in the Xhosa communicative test. It has been established that English-speaking pupils performed significantly better than Afrikaans-speaking pupils in all facets of the test even when control for area was instituted.

Grade does not appear to influence performance in the Xhosa communicative test significantly.

6.8 Inter-subtest analysis

6.8.1 Listening

In an attempt to identify influences caused by extraneous variables, i.e., those which are not part of the test, for example, sex, grade and home language, sections of the Xhosa communicative test were examined for relationship testing of differences between sections.

In all cases except one (Table 19.2), when the listening subtest was compared to other sections of the test, there was a statistically significant difference. When 10 or fewer pupils were tested in a particular section, there was no statistically significant difference between the two scores.

The following tables show the various sections of the test compared to one another. Comparison is based on the total sample (159).

TABLE 19.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY THE TOTAL SAMPLE IN EACH OF THE SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE TEST

VARIABLE	N	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
Popula-tion	159	63,3	42,2	42,4	52,1	50,1

TABLE 19.2 COMPARED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-SUBTESTS OF THE XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST BASED ON AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY POPULATION, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TESTS	POPULATION	TESTS	POPULATION	TESTS	POPULATION
Listening-Functions	0,000*	Functions-Notions	0,453	Notions-Free Con.	0,000*
Listening-Notions	0,000*	Functions-Free Con.	0,000*	Notions-Total test	0,000*
Listening-Free con.	0,000*	Functions Total test	0,000*		
Listening-Total Test	0,000*	Free Con. Total test	0,008*		

*significant at p_ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

TABLE 19.3 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY THE TOTAL SAMPLE ESPECIALLY NOTING INSTANCES WHERE LISTENING COMPREHENSION IS COMPARED

VARIABLE		N	LISTENING	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	FREE CONVER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
SEX	Female	89	66,0	45,3	44,5	54,5	53,0
	Male	70	60,4	38,3	40,0	49,0	47,0
H/LANG.	Afrikaans	57	55,5	36,0	32,1	47,1	43,3
	English	97	67,1	45,5	47,5	55,0	54,0
GRADES	Higher	126	63,0	44,2	43,0	53,0	51,0
	Standard	33	65,4	34,6	40,4	49,1	47,2
	Population	159	63,3	42,2	42,2	52,1	50,1

TABLE 19.4 COMPARED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-SUBTESTS OF THE XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST BASED ON AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED BY PUPILS, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TESTS	FEM.	MALES	AFR.	ENG.	H.G.	S.G.	POPULATION
Listening Functions	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Listening Notions	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Listening Free Con.	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Listening-Tot. Test	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*

*significant at p_ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

It seems that the subtests on listening comprehension, language functions, language notions and free conversation, measure different elements of language proficiency because in all possible comparisons of the sections, statistically significant results were gained. The only exception is in the case of functions compared with notions which do not differ significantly, as might have been expected

In subsequent comparisons, controls for extraneous variables will be made.

Table 19.3 shows, as does Table 19.1, a marked difference between average percentage scores obtained for listening and other sections of the test. In Table 19.4 a statistically significant difference is confirmed. This is accepted. As the listening test evaluates a different aspect of oral proficiency, it was expected that its score would differ from that of the different sections of the test. In other words, the listening test tried to measure the level of the **receptive** language skill (listening comprehension) as opposed to the **productive** language skill (speaking).

When a comparison between the listening subtest and other sections of the test was made using extraneous variables the same pattern in the results was noted: the difference was statistically significant. It seems that extraneous variables do not have an influence on distribution of scores when listening comprehension is compared with other sections of the test.

6.8.2 Language functions

The following tables show the various sections of the test compared to one another. Comparison is based on the total sample. The subtest on language functions is compared with each subtest of the Xhosa communicative test.

TABLE 20.1 COMPARED INTER-SUBTESTS USING THE AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED IN THEM BY TOTAL SAMPLE, FEATURING MAINLY SUBTEST ON LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

VARIABLE		N	FUNCTIONS	LISTENING	NOTIONS	FREE CON-VER-SATION	TOTAL TEST
SEX	Female	89	45,3	66,0	44,5	54,5	53,0
	Male	70	38,3	60,4	40,0	49,0	47,0
H/LANG.	Afrikaans	57	36,0	55,5	32,1	47,1	43,3
	English	97	45,5	67,1	47,5	55,0	54,0
GRADES	Higher	126	44,2	63,0	43,0	53,0	51,0
	Standard	33	34,6	65,4	40,4	49,1	47,2
	Population	159	42,2	63,3	42,4	52,1	50,1

TABLE 20.2 COMPARED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-SUBTESTS OF THE XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST COMPARING MAINLY LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS WITH EACH SUBTEST, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TESTS	FEM.	MALES	AFR.	ENG.	H.G.	S.G.	POPULATION
Functions-Listening	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Functions-Notions	0,353	0,000*	0,051	0,145	0,191	0,047	0,453
Functions-Free con.	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Functions-Tot. Test	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Tables 20.1 and 20.2 show that where the subtest on language functions was compared with the one on listening, the difference was statistically significant. This may indicate that the two subtests measure different elements of oral proficiency.

However, where the subtest on language functions was compared with the one on language notions, there was no statistically significant difference except in one instance where the variable males was used. This position is accepted.

It seems that language functions and notions are interwoven. Johnson and Morrow (1981:5) support this view and add that the distinction (between functions and notions) is certainly a difficult one to express in precise terms.

Sentences express both language functions and notions. It may be argued therefore that as a prerequisite for effective communication, it is necessary to be both competent in language functions and notions and to be able to use these in performance.

For example, in order to say "Fika ngomso" (come tomorrow), one has to use both a function (expressing a command - fika and the notion futurity - ngomso). It is therefore expected that there would be a relationship between results of the subtest on language functions and the subtest on language notions. In order to determine the degree of relatedness of the two

variables, language functions and notions, a statistical calculation known as the coefficient of correlation was made. The correlation between the two was ,74 which is a fairly high correlation. The result points to a strong relationship between the variables language functions and language notions.

In environments where a comparison was made between the subtests on language functions and free conversation, it was discovered that there was a statistically significant difference. This was to be expected since the two subtests evaluated different elements of oral proficiency.

When the subtest on language functions was compared with the overall average percentage score of the total test, the difference was also significant. This was expected, because the subtest on language functions was a measuring instrument whilst the total test was not. As stated earlier, it represents the total average percentage score of the test battery.

From the above, it is possible to conclude that extraneous variables do not seem to have an influence on the distribution of scores when the subtest on language functions is compared with the other subtests.

The extraneous variable sex, does seem to have influenced two subsections of the subtests, language functions and notions because males scored lower in both language functions and notions.

6.8.3 Language notions

The following tables show differences in subtests on average percentage scores obtained by the total sample. The subtest on language notions is compared with the other subtests.

TABLE 21.1 COMPARED AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OF TOTAL TEST SAMPLE IN RESPECT OF SUBTEST OF XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST USING SUBTEST ON LANGUAGE NOTIONS AS MAIN COMPARISON

VARIABLES		N	NOTIONS	FREE CON-VER-SATION	TOTAL TEST	FUNCTIONS	LISTENING
SEX	Female	89	44,5	54,5	53,0	45,3	66,0
	Male	70	40,0	49,0	47,0	38,3	60,4
H/LANG.	Afrikaans	57	32,1	47,1	43,3	36,0	55,5
	English	97	47,5	55,0	54,0	45,5	67,1
GRADES	Higher	126	43,0	53,0	51,0	44,2	63,0
	Standard	33	40,4	49,1	47,2	34,6	65,4
Population		159	42,4	52,1	50,1	42,2	63,3

TABLE 21.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-SUBTESTS USING AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OF THE TOTAL SAMPLE, ALSO COMPARING THE SUBTEST ON LANGUAGE NOTIONS WITH OTHER SUBTESTS; P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TESTS	FEM.	MALES	AFR.	ENG.	H.G.	S.G.	POPULATION
Notions-Free con.	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,034	0,000*
Notions-Tot. Test	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,015*	0,000*
Notions-Functions	0,353	0,000*	0,051	0,145	0,191	0,047	0,453
Notions-Listening	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

In Table 21.2 a statistically significant difference is observed between scores obtained for notions and free conversation subtests, between the notions and listening subtests, as well

as between the notions subtest, and the scores of the total test. The subtest on free conversation evaluates specific elements of oral proficiency. Just as in the case of functions, the extraneous variables do not have an influence on the distribution of scores when the test on notions is compared with other sections of the communicative test.

It has been stated that the distinction between language functions and language notions is certainly a difficult one to express in precise terms. It was also argued that sentences express both functions and notions i.e. the use to which the language is put within a unit of meaning, for example, time, space, quantity.

One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view (Savignon 1983).

Function is the use to which language is put, the purpose of an utterance rather than a particular grammatical form an utterance takes. A language function has to do with what is said as opposed to how something is said (Savignon 1983:13). Language, therefore, is used for an infinite number of purposes: to command, to describe, to request, to agree, to report, to attract attention etc. The function of a particular utterance can be understood only when the utterance is placed in its context of situation.

Communicative competence involves three types of knowledge - of grammar, signification and use (Johnson 1982:21). In order to master a foreign language, one has to know how the language functions, the rules governing the formation of time reference, i.e. signification and the use to which language is put, for example, how to order or request information - rules of use.

Several linguists stress the point that in the past language teaching has neglected the area of use (Wilkins 1976; Johnson 1982; Savignon 1983). A notional-functional syllabus aims to redress the balance.

The difference between functions and notions lies in the distinction between signification and use. The notions provide a means of itemising signification while functions are items of use (Johnson 1982). This distinction may be illustrated by means of an example:

Ndiya kufika ngomso, (I shall/will come tomorrow.)

In the above sentence the signification of "-ya" (will) indicates future time while "ngomso" (tomorrow) signifies the day following today. An alternative way of expressing this is to say that "-ya" (will) indicates a concept of futurity, "ngomso" (tomorrow) the concept of a point of future time. The analysis is a notional one. But this analysis has said nothing of the use to which the sentence might be put, the various functions it may perform. These may include reassuring. One recognises the function of an utterance by asking why the speaker said it.

The above discussion is an illustration of the relationship between language functions and language notions, as well as the elements which make up successful communication and how these elements are organised within a notional-functional syllabus into semantic and functional categories within a general consideration of the communicative functions of language.

6.8.4 Free conversation

In the following tables the inter-subtests results are shown. These are based on the average percentage scores obtained by the total sample. Results focus on the comparison between the subtest on free conversation and the other subtests of the Xhosa communicative test.

TABLE 22.1 INTER-SUBTESTS AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORE OF THE FULL TEST SAMPLE WHERE THE SUBTEST ON FREE CONVERSATION IS COMPARED WITH THE OTHER SUBTESTS OF THE XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST

VARIABLES		N	FREE CON-VER-SATION	FUNCTIONS	NOTIONS	LISTENING	TOTAL TEST
SEX	Female	89	54,5	45,3	44,5	66,0	53,0
	Male	70	49,0	38,3	40,0	60,4	47,0
H/LANG.	Afrikaans	57	47,1	36,0	32,1	55,5	43,3
	English	97	55,0	45,5	47,5	67,1	54,0
GRADE	Higher	126	53,0	44,2	43,0	63,0	51,0
	Standard	33	49,1	34,6	40,4	65,4	47,2
Population		159	52,1	42,2	42,4	63,3	50,1

TABLE 22.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INTER-SUBTESTS AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OF THE TEST SAMPLE, WHERE THE SUBTEST ON FREE-CONVERSATION IS COMPARED WITH THE OTHER SUBTESTS OF THE XHOSA COMMUNICATIVE TEST, P-VALUE BASED ON T-TESTS

TESTS	FEM.	MALES	AFR.	ENGL	H.G.	S.G.	POPULATION
Free con-. Functions	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Free con-. Notions	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,034	0,000*
Free con-. Listening	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*
Free con. Tot. test	0,044	0,049	0,000*	0,127	0,010*	0,201	0,008*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

The differences and relationships between the free conversation test and all the subtests have been pointed out and explained. A comparison between free conversation and the total test may not be regarded as being valid. The total test includes combined scores of all the subtests. Also, the total test is not a test, but an average of the percentage scores of all the sections of the test on Xhosa oral proficiency. The comparison between the two is therefore not valid.

The above discussion may be summarised as follows:

a) Listening comprehension scores are higher than any other subtest individually or all subtests combined. This is valid regardless of any control variable.

b) Average percentage scores obtained in the subtest on functions are lower than other subtests, except for the subtest on notions and all subtests combined, regardless of any control variable.

c) Similarities (as argued for in par. 6.8.3) between subtests on functions and notions are observed for all control variables except males.

d) The average percentage score on the subtest on free conversation is higher than that on functions and notions but lower than the one on listening. For combined values it is the same for females, males, English speaking pupils and Xhosa Standard Grade, and higher for Afrikaans-speaking pupils and Xhosa Higher Grade.

6.9 A comparison of the Xhosa communicative test with other tests

The following tables show scores obtained by pupils in other Xhosa tests and examinations for 1985. These are oral Xhosa tests conducted by teachers before and after the schools were visited. The average percentage scores in Xhosa obtained by all candidates during the 1985 Senior Certificate Xhosa examination as well as the Xhosa oral year mark are also shown.

TABLE 23.1 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES OBTAINED

TEST	N	MEAN (AVERAGE %)
Xhosa communicative test	159	50,1
Senior Certificate Xhosa examination	193*	58,0
Xhosa communicative test	159	62,0
Xhosa school oral test	159	50,1
Free conversation test	159	52,1
Xhosa oral year mark	159	64,8

*This comparison is limited because the mean score is that of all the pupils who wrote the examination and not particularly that of 159 pupils who were used in the sample.

TABLE 23.2 AVERAGE SCHOOL XHOSA ORAL PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO AREA

AREA	N	MEAN
1	91	60,0
2	44	63,0
3	24	67,0

TABLE 23.3 DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES ACCORDING TO AREAS, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

AREA	TEST
1 - 2	0,070
1 - 3	0,013*
2 - 3	0,105

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

TABLE 23.4 DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE SCORES, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

		N	MEAN	DIFFERENCE
SEX	Female	89	63,0	
	Male	70	60,4	
				0,081
H/LANG.	Afrikaans	57	61,5	
	English	97	62,0	
				0,443
GRADE	Higher	126	63,0	
	Standard	33	57,4	
				0,013*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

TABLE 23.5 DIFFERENCES IN SCORES ACCORDING TO POPULATION, P-VALUES BASED ON T-TESTS

TEST	GROUP	DIFFERENCE
Free Conversation test Xhosa oral year mark	Population	0,000*

*significant at p _ 0,025 (one-tailed testing)

Table 23.1 shows that a higher average percentage score was gained in the Senior Certificate Xhosa examination when compared to the total score for the Xhosa communicative test.

The Senior Certificate Xhosa examination includes scores obtained in written (language) and oral examinations. Expressed in aggregate symbols the pupils obtained a D-symbol which is equivalent to the one obtained for the communicative test. There was no statistically significant difference in aggregate percentage symbols gained between the tests.

The above results indicate a higher average percentage score obtained by the pupils in the Xhosa school oral test (tests conducted by teachers at various schools) when compared with that obtained in Xhosa communicative test (50,1%). Further, pupils obtained a higher average Xhosa oral year mark in 1985 than the score obtained for the subtest on free conversation.

Area 3 (Border) obtained the highest overall percentage score (Table 23.2). The average percentage scores obtained by Area 1 compared to Area 3 were statistically significantly different, (Table 23.3). Table 23.4 shows that females obtained higher average scores than males. There was however, no statistically significant difference between the scores obtained by Afrikaans-speaking pupils compared to those obtained by English-speaking pupils (Table 23.4).

Average scores obtained by the group studying Xhosa on the Higher Grade were higher than those obtained by the Standard Grade group.

The Xhosa school oral test, (administered by teachers at various schools), did not seem to discriminate between the pupils' performance in the same way as the test in this study.

It was stated earlier on that the Xhosa communicative test was conducted between April and July 1985. When comparing the average scores obtained by the pupils for the Xhosa school oral test and the Xhosa oral year mark (62,0% and 64,8%) the difference is relatively small (2,8%). One would expect the difference to be greater assuming that the pupils might have gained more communicative proficiency in Xhosa on a longer time scale.

There was however, a statistically significant difference between the subtest on free conversation and the Xhosa oral year mark. (Table 23.5). One may assume, therefore, that the free conversation test did evaluate communicative oral proficiency. As stated in chapter 4 of this study, guidelines laid down by the Department do not appear to be testing oral proficiency, hence the statistically significant difference between the two test scores. Testing was done by different test administrators under different conditions when determining the Xhosa oral year mark. In general the school tests showed little differences

between scores obtained in respect of areas, sex, home language. This may be expected because the tests were not applied under the same conditions, using the same techniques and test administrators.

Pupils obtained a higher average percentage score in the Xhosa school oral test (62%) compared to the Xhosa communicative test (50,1%). When comparing average percentage scores obtained for the Xhosa oral year mark (64,8%) with those gained in the subtest on free conversation (52,1%), the same pattern may be observed as teachers tended to accord more points.

The pupils obtained a seemingly low average percentage score (50,1%) on the subtest on functions. On looking at the different sections of the test, the highest average score was obtained for listening. Pupils obtained low average scores for the tests on functions and notions.

The results in this section suggest that the Xhosa communicative test was applied strictly. It discriminated amongst the pupils. It is possible that teachers determining the Xhosa oral year mark may have been more lenient and perhaps, subjective.

It is possible that the Xhosa school oral test did not discriminate between females and males nor between English- speaking and Afrikaans-speaking pupils. It would have been expected that it should at least have discriminated in terms of either one of these variables or in both. This may lend weight to the opinion that the test was subjective, less reliable and not valid.

6.10 Summary

It is inferred in this study that current techniques used by teachers and the guidelines suggested by the Department to evaluate Xhosa oral proficiency may not measure their objectives. This study points to a need for further research in developing a standardised Xhosa oral communicative test which may properly evaluate oral proficiency.

The present study also highlights the important influence area has on performance. Area has been associated with language exposure. Both literature study and empirical evidence have strengthened the view that exposure to an area in which the target language is spoken may facilitate proficiency in that language. The study also revealed that although exposure to the language is an important prerequisite for second language acquisition it is not a means in itself. Motivation and the attitude of the second language learners play a role in

the learning of a target language. A literature survey identified two groups of learners, namely high input generators and low input generators to substantiate the importance of affective factors in second language acquisition. It has been noted that being exposed to language is not like being exposed to a virus (Seliger 1977:275). One does not catch it automatically. In order to catch it, the learner must do something active that involves him cognitively in the process.

Female pupils performed statistically significantly better than male pupils. The study also reveals that English-speaking pupils performed significantly better than their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts.

The study also shows that pupils studying Xhosa on the Higher Grade will not necessarily perform better than those learning it on the Standard Grade.

It was found that pupils performed best in the listening subtest. This implies that their listening-comprehension was better developed than the other skills. Their receptive skill was more developled than their productive one.

Pupils performed unsatisfactorily in the tests on functions and notions. In general, the level of performance of the pupils was rather poor (D symbol). At least three variables had a definite influence on the performance of the pupils in the communicative test, namely area, sex and home language.

Because Xhosa is spoken in the three areas in which the schools were situated, it was assumed that in at least two areas, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and Border, pupils would perform significantly better. These areas are predominantly inhabited by Xhosa-speaking people. It was assumed that many pupils came into regular contact with Xhosa-speaking people, and so pupils ought to be exposed to the target language.

There was in fact a statistically significant difference in respect of the test on listening between Area 1 and Areas 2 and 3 combined. This may mean that pupils in Areas 2 and 3 were indeed exposed to the target language.

It may be reasoned that since all the schools were situated in an urban area and not in a rural one, it would have been difficult for the pupils to practise speaking the language with Xhosa mother tongue speakers. It may be argued that social distance may have contributed to a situation in which pupils, although exposed to the target group, were not exposed to its language.

Rivers (1983:234) refers to social distance to describe the fact that language learners and available native speakers attend different schools, go to different churches, enjoy different types of leisure activities (sports, music, or social gatherings), so that opportunities to meet each other are rare without some major effort on the learner's part and some reciprocal response on the part of the native speakers. This viewpoint by Rivers appears to be acceptable and more contextual than the one used by Schumann (1976b:396-397).

The aspect of social distance may have an influence on the learning of Xhosa, but it cannot be confirmed. As it was not the main aim of this study to investigate social distance, this aspect may offer opportunities for further research.

The present study found that female pupils performed statistically significantly better than male pupils, in the total test as well as in the subtests. This result confirms studies made on differences in language ability between males and females.

It was pointed out in the case of both language groups that since formal instruction does not allow for any verbal interaction between the learner and others in his environment because of time constraints among other things, additional practice is necessary if the learner is to completely acquire and retain the feature system of a new language concept. This means that much of what ought to be learnt, even given an optimal teaching system, ought to be acquired outside of formal instructional setting but perhaps built on what was learnt within a formal instructional framework.

6.11 Conclusion

The results of the test have raised key issues in the learning of Xhosa by pupils under the Cape Department of Education. The results have also indicated certain avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

7.1.1 The theoretical study

The main findings of the theoretical section of the study draw upon Stephen Krashen's monitor model (1982b).

The basic argument is that people come to speak a second language largely through exposure to a large dose of comprehensible input. Comprehensible input means input that is, at most, just a little beyond the learner's level.

A basic distinction is made between learning and acquisition. Learning entails the conscious knowledge of words and structures in a language, whereas acquisition involves an unconscious assimilation or absorption of language without conscious effort. It is hypothesized that much of a learner's development in a language is actually a result of acquisition, rather than of learning. According to Cohen (1982:16) some evidence for this is found in the observed results of formal teaching of grammar. Even if the best teacher manages to teach most of the "important" rules to the best pupil, there is no assurance that this pupil will produce these rules when actually called upon to use them in speaking (Cohen 1982:16).

In other words, there seems to be a difference between what a learner knows (or claims to know) about a language and what that learner can actually use. Krashen (1982b) would claim that the learner draws on acquired words and structures when speaking much more than on learned forms. He claims that emphasis should be on the creation of environments in which the learners are exposed to extensive language input that is comprehensible to them.

It follows that one cannot achieve native-like (or near native-like) performance of a second language with only a short time of exposure to it. Although no one knows how much time it takes, it is quite clear that it cannot be done exclusively in a classroom; even in a classroom where the perfect balance between form and function, structure and communication has been struck.

Pupils spend approximately 490 hours from standards 6 to 10 learning Xhosa at school. Teachers have to allocate time for oral, setwork, language and creative writing, so there is little authentic practice.

Therefore the context of natural language use should be exploited. There should be more verbal interaction between the pupils and Xhosa-speaking people within the learners' environment. Pupils should seek exposure to the target language by making contact with Xhosa-speaking people.

7.1.2 Communicative testing

It has been noted that the field of methods in language teaching has been revitalised by different theories concerning the nature of language, by new theories concerning the control process of language acquisition, by innovative proposals for syllabus development and the design of instructional systems, as well as by the use of a variety of novel practices, techniques and procedures in the language classroom.

Testing of second language proficiency tends to reflect a theory of language and may be related to teaching methodologies. One could describe discrete-point testing as being developed from discrete-point type teaching methods such as the audiolingual approach. If teachers are doing communicative teaching, the development of communicative achievement should follow.

In preparing a communicative test, it is important to become acquainted with a theory of language testing. Only that which is put into the construction of a particular test or set of tests by way of theoretical insight, reasoning or hypothesis-building in advance will come out of it. This means that a theoretical understanding of what is to be tested or has been tested is essential.

It was noted that one particular test which has several advantages over the others is the functional test. First, its development is based on principles of a well-known theory which makes the purpose of the test clear. This means that the content validity of such a test is almost automatically guaranteed because what is required to be measured is known exactly before developing the test. A functional test could serve several purposes including placement, criterion-related, proficiency, and diagnostic measurement.

The assumptions on which the empirical study (i.e. the design and application of the communicative test) were based can be summed up as follows:

a) Language is a means of communication. Language is used to express man's ideas about the world surrounding him.

b) Communicative competence subsumes the ability to interpret accurately and correctly produce well-formed sentences for use in discourse appropriate to social situations, and to discern and employ a variety of subcodes depending on the characteristics of the communicative situation.

c) A communicative approach should be based on and respond to the learner's communication needs. These should be specified with respect to grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

d) The second-language learner must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction, i.e. he must respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations.

e) The principal organising factors of the syllabus are the functions and notions which will be valuable to teach. This can be determined by a needs analysis. In developing a functional test, then, selection of the functions and notions is important.

f) Communicative testing should be viewed as the response to recent changes of emphasis in language teaching where importance is attached to communication rather than to formal accuracy and to purpose-specific rather than general language.

g) A communicative test should assess language used for a purpose beyond itself. Also, it should depend on the bridging of an information gap.

h) A communicative test should include terms which focus on assessing the examinees' ability to handle the communicative functions of language rather than their ability to use linguistic forms only.

i) A functional test should basically involve integrated rather than isolated skills. It should seek answers to such questions as the examinees' ability to perform certain functions and notions in appropriate social environments.

j) The advantage of a functional test is that it incorporates contextualisation, the most praised characteristic of integrative tests, and item independence, the obvious advantages of discrete - point tests, into one testing approach.

7.1.3 The empirical study

The main findings are as follows:

a) The area where the pupil is schooled does not make any statistically significant difference in his overall score in the test. It does however make a difference with regard to listening comprehension and notions.

b) There is a statistically significant difference in the performance between females and males in important sections of the test.

c) Average percentage scores attained by English-speaking pupils were greater than those obtained by Afrikaans- speaking pupils. These were statistically significantly different in all the subsections as well as the total score.

d) The grade does not make any statistically significant difference in the overall score in the test. It does, however, make a difference with regard to functions.

e) Area, when considered as a control variable, influences the performance of pupils.

f) Listening is fairly well developed.

g) Functions and notions are underdeveloped, notions being less developed than functions.

h) Free conversation is on an average level.

i) All in all the total test seems to be fairly representative of all elements of proficiency, when taken as a combined outcome, but still to be a little strict in its application.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Testing

Two recommendations are made with regard to testing. A standardised Xhosa communicative test should be investigated, designed and applied, and one-to-one testing and group testing should be integrated when pupils are evaluated in their Xhosa oral proficiency.

7.2.2 Functions and notions

Several issues have been raised regarding language functions and notions. For example, many communicative tests draw their selection of language functions and notions from the **Threshold Level** syllabus (Van Ek and Alexander 1980), an entirely subjective and speculative document based largely on the intuitions of its compilers (Yalden 1983). The **Threshold** syllabus lacks any form of validation. It was devised for a specific target group, the adult learner working within the European context (Johnson 1982:34).

It has also been stated that the distinction between language functions and language notions is certainly a difficult one to express in precise terms because utterances express both functions and notions.

Furthermore, this study has observed that amongst the pupils tested, functions and notions are underdeveloped, notions least of all. This underdevelopment of language functions and notions may be the result of the formal teaching methods used. It is recommended therefore that attention be given to creating situations in which both language functions and notions can be practised.

The inability to use functions and notions may be a constraint in communicating in Xhosa since functions and notions become (in communicative language teaching) the starting point as well as the objectives of language learning and teaching.

7.2.3 Allocation of marks

Endley (1983:38) states that prior to the introduction of the current syllabus, the mark ratio between the aural/oral and writing skills was 16,6%:83,4%. He states now that the 15% allocated to oral examination in the present syllabus is less than before and cannot constitute a motivating factor for the pupil to learn to speak Xhosa. It is obvious in which

direction the average teacher will channel his teaching efforts. There is thus an imbalance in marks allotted for oral. It is recommended that this imbalance be rectified by allocating additional marks for oral in view of the fact that the present approach lays more emphasis on oral communication.

Evaluation material designed for written examination should also be communicative in character. This is important since Xhosa language learning should help pupils achieve some kind of communicative skill in the target language. All situations in which real communication occurs naturally have to be taken advantage of.

7.2.4 Communicative activities

Teachers will have to be able to devise communicative activities which will enable pupils to engage in meaningful interaction which is communicative in character. Two devices may help the teacher in devising communicative activities: information gap and opinion gap (Klippel 1984). Information-gap exercises force the participants to exchange information in order to find a solution, for example, by reconstituting a text, solving a puzzle and writing a summary. Example of information-gap exercises are guessing games, jigsaw tasks and problem-solving activities.

Opinion-gap exercises are exercises incorporating controversial texts or ideas, which require participants to describe and perhaps defend their views on these ideas (Klippel 1984:4). Another type of opinion-gap activity can be organised by letting the participants share their feelings about an experience they have in common.

It is possible that by applying the principles of information gap and opinion gap to traditional exercises, the teacher can change them into more challenging communicative activities.

Since communicative language teaching is learner-centred, many of the activities should be concerned with the learners themselves. Their feelings and ideas are the focal point of these exercises, around which a lot of their target language activity revolves. For learners who are studying Xhosa in a non-Xhosa-speaking setting (the classroom/school with non-Xhosa-speaking pupils), it is important to experience real communicative situations in which they learn to express their own views and attitudes, and in which they are taken seriously as people.

Learning is more effective if the learners are actively involved in the process. The degree of learner activity depends, among other things, on the type of material they are working on. The pupils' curiosity may be aroused by texts or pictures containing discrepancies or mistakes, or by missing or muddled information, and this curiosity leads to the wish to find out, to put right or to complete.

Pupils performed poorly in the unstructured free conversation subtest. The reason for this may be the lack of contact with the target language group. It is recommended therefore that avenues of contact with Xhosa- speaking people be explored to provide conversation practice. Group activities in class should also be encouraged.

7.2.5 Selected variables

7.2.5.1 Area

Table 9 shows that 42,8% of the pupils were found in Areas 2 and 3. It has also been argued that these are the areas which have the majority of Xhosa-speaking people. Therefore pupils in these areas should take advantage of the intense exposure to the target language. They should be encouraged to take Xhosa as a school subject.

7.2.5.2 Sex

In the sample, 56% of the pupils studying Xhosa were females. This factor is related to findings in the literature survey. Males however, should be encouraged to take Xhosa in view of the need to speak an African language in the work situation. A study made by Gxilishe and Van der Vyver (forthcoming) shows that the inability of foremen/supervisors to instruct black unskilled/semi-skilled workers in their mother tongue on the one hand, and the inability of Xhosa-speaking workers to communicate properly in Afrikaans or English on the other is a serious problem.

Both management and black unskilled workers agree that one solution to language communication problems would be for blacks to learn either English or Afrikaans and supervisors to have a working knowledge of Xhosa at the shop floor level. The importance of being able to speak Xhosa in the work situation cannot be over-emphasised.

7.2.5.3 Grade

The distinction between Xhosa Higher Grade and Xhosa Standard Grade should fall away. The present study shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of pupils who study Xhosa on different grades.

7.2.5.4 Home language

In the sample 61% of the pupils were English-speaking. Although pupils taking Xhosa in Afrikaans-medium schools are in the minority the results both with regard to performance and motivation should be noted. Teachers in these schools should encourage more Afrikaans-speaking pupils to take Xhosa as a school subject. They should motivate pupils to perform better in Xhosa by providing more practice and by making possible contact with Xhosa-speaking people.

In general, there appears to be a concern in the white community about failure to understand an African language. This concern reveals itself in the desire to learn at least one African language (see Die Vaderland, 3.7.1985; Rapport, 21.7.1985 and Die Burger, 9.6.1986).

The white community feels a need for learning to communicate in an African language. Rapport (21.7.1985) confirms this feeling when it states

> Meer as 75 persent van die blanke kiesers voel dat blanke leerlinge verplig moet word om 'n swart taal aan te leer.
>
> Die verrassing is dat daar oor hierdie vraag feitlik geen verskil tussen Afrikaans- en Engelssprekendes se sienswyse is nie.

Regarding the learning of African languages by pupils Rapport elaborates:

> Gevra of hulle die verpligte aanleer van 'n swart taal deur blanke skoliere sou goedkeur of afkeur, antwoord 76,2 persent van die blankes in die landwye steekproef dat hulle dit goedkeur. Slegs 10,5 persent keur dit af.

Rapport points out that:

> Dit is interessant dat die jongste groep (16-24) kleiner mate as die ander ouderdomsgroepe ten gunste van die verpligte aanleer van 'n swart taal is.

These statements suggest an integrative motive to learn Xhosa because of a desire to communicate with the target group. Implicit in this statement is a positive view of that community.

Two things, then, emerge clearly. There is a strong desire among white South Africans to learn an African language, which should be met. Second, a communicative teaching approach offers the best means of enabling learners to use a language.

It is recommended that efforts be made to establish some contact between the Xhosa-speaking community and the schools. The results of this study show that a communicative language approach is poorly understood. There is another difficulty. Most of those who teach Xhosa lack the competence to meet the demands a communicative approach makes.

Wilkins (1983:37) observes that it is unlikely that teachers whose own competence in the foreign language is weak will feel able to handle the considerable professional and linguistic demands that this kind of contact will place on them.

There seems to be a pressing need to provide the authentic language which this approach demands. Roving Xhosa teachers have also been suggested to meet this need. They could visit schools, teach pupils and brief teachers (see also Gebeda 1975 and Endley 1983).

Appointing mother-tongue speakers seems an even better solution to the problem. Van Staden quoted in Endley (1983:12) points out a strange reluctance to take this obvious step.

7.3 Future research

This study reveals clearly the need for extensive research in the application of communicative language teaching/testing using Xhosa as a target language. Most particularly, it highlights the urgent need to discover effective means of enabling pupils to acquire Xhosa language functions and notions, and to use the language appropriately. However, unless effective testing can be devised, these objectives are unlikely to be met. It

seems clear that teachers must become thoroughly acquainted with the principles of communicative teaching, and that a means must be found of achieving this situation.

At the beginning of this study it was argued that the teaching of Xhosa should be regarded as L_2 teaching. The findings in this study and the lines of research it has identified, apply to all language instruction other than mother tongue instruction.

Urgent attention should be given to equipping the teachers concerned to meet their new and demanding professional role. This study is the first step towards providing them with an effective measuring instrument of L_2 and L_3 pupils' communicative competence.

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APPENDIX I (THE FINAL TEST)

TEST CONTENT

CODE:
NO.:

SECTION A

The examiner attempts to put the pupil at ease. He takes the initiative and greets the pupil. He asks a few questions, in English/Afrikaans, e.g. name, address, age, home language and any further questions deemed necessary in order to build up the pupil's confidence so that he will respond naturally and uneffectedly. No assessment is made.

SECTION B (Listening comprehension test)
AFDELING B (Gehoorbegripstoets)

Instruction to the pupil

I shall read you some sentences to which you must respond by doing something physical or by agreeing or disagreeing, i.e. by saying "yes" or "no". Each sentence will be read twice and you must respond immediately after the second time.

For example, if I say: "Jonga efestileni", you should respond by looking at the window.

If I say "Iiyunivesithi zininzi kule dolophu", you should say "Hayi" because this is not true.

If I ask you: "Uyazibona na ezi ncwadi phezu kwetafile?", you should respond by saying "Ewe", if you see books on the table.

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek sal vir jou 'n paar sinne lees waarop jy moet reageer deur of fisies iets te doen of deur "ja" te antwoord indien jy saamstem, of "nee" indien jy verskil. Elke sin sal twee maal gelees word. Nadat ek dit vir die tweede maal gelees het, moet jy so spoedig moontlik reageer.

As ek bv. se: "Jonga efestileni", moet jy reageer deur dadelik na die venster te kyk.

As ek se: "Iiyunivesithi zininzi kule dolophu" en dit is onwaar, moet jy se: "Hayi".

As ek vra: "Uyazibona na ezi ncwadi phezu kwetafile?" sal jy "Ewe" antwoord indien jy wel boeke op die tafel sien.

I shall start now/Ek begin nou

1	**Command**	Vala amehlo. (Close your eyes.)
2	**Question**	Le glasi iphezu kwetafile izele na ngamanzi? (Is the glass which is on the table full of water?)
3	**Statement**	Kufundisa amaxhego odwa kwesi sikolo. (Only grandfathers teach at this school.)
4	**Statement**	Inqununu yesi sikolo ngumfazi/yindoda. (The principal of this school is a woman/man.)
5	**Command**	Susa iphephandaba esitulweni, libeke etafileni. (Remove the newspaper from the chair, put it on the table.)
6	**Question**	Ndinxibe ihempe emnyama neqhina elibomvu? (Am I wearing a black shirt and a red tie?)
7	**Statement**	Namhlanje imvula iyana. (Today it is raining.)
8	**Command**	Thabatha usiba oluluhlaza ubhale ephepheni igama, ifani, nebanga okulo. (Take a blue pen and write on the paper your name, surname and the standard you are in)
9	**Question**	Yinyaniso le nto yokuba uhamba isikolo ukususela ngoMvulo kude kube yiCawa? (Is it true that you attend school from Monday to Sunday?)
10	**Question**	Ezi ncwadi ziphezu kwetafile zibhalwe ngumntu omnye? (Have the books on the table been written by one person?)
11	**Statement**	Kushushu kakhulu namhlanje abantu baza kudada. (It is very hot today and the people are going to swim.)
12	**Command**	Phakama uqokelele zonke iincwadi, wakugqiba zifake ebhokisini. (Stand up, then put all the books into a pile: when you have finished put them in the box.)

(Commands: 4 Questions: 4 Statements: 4)

SECTION C SERIES A (Functions)
AFDELING C REEKS A (Funksies)

Instruction to pupil

I am going to ask you a few questions and each time you must answer me in Xhosa. Each question will be read twice and you must respond immediately after the second time.

For example, I may ask "Uyathemba ukuba umhlobo wakho uza kufika?"

You may answer "Ewe (ndiyathemba)", if you hope that your friend will arrive.

Opdrag aan leerling

Ek gaan vir jou 'n paar vrae vra waarop jy in Xhosa moet antwoord. Elke vraag sal twee maal gelees word. Nadat ek dit vir die tweede maal gelees het, moet jy so spoedig moontlik reageer.

Gestel ek vra: "Uyathemba ukuba umhlobo wakho uza kufika?"

dan kan jy as volg antwoord: "Ewe (ndiyathemba)", as jy hoop dat jou vriend sal kom.

I shall now start/Ek begin nou

1	**Ukuvumelana**	Uyahambisana nale nto yokubethwa kwabafundi esikolweni?
	(Agreement)	(Do you agree that children should be beaten at school?)
2	**Ukuqinisekisa**	Yinyaniso le nto yokuba umdlalo wombhoxo udlalwa ehlotyeni?
	(Ascertaining)	(Is it true that rugby is played in summer?)
3	**Ukwanela**	Xa wanele kukusebenza ekhaya wenza ntoni?
	(Satisfaction)	(What do you do when you have finished your home duties?)
4	**Udano**	Udaniswe yintoni kwimidlalo yesikolo?
	(Disappointment)	(What has disappointed you in school sport?)

5	**Isiyalelo**	Abantu abanxiba impahla eshushu ebusika balumkele ntoni?
	(Warning)	(What are people who wear warm clothes in winter afraid of?)
6	**Ukuchaza**	Ufunda eziphi izifundo kwesi sikolo?
	(Describing)	(Which subjects do you learn in this school?)
7	**Ukuvumelana**	Wena ufunda kwibanga leshumi kulo unyaka, uyavuma?
	(Agreement)	(You are in standard ten this year. Do you agree?)
8	**Ukuqinisekisa**	Uqiniseka ngantoni eluviweni ukuphela konyaka?
	(Ascertaining)	(What are you sure of in the exams at the end of the year?)
9	**Udano**	Uva into embi yintoni namhlanje?
	(Disappointment)	(What makes you feel bad today?)
10	**Isiyalelo**	Xa uphethe imali eninzi ulumkela ntoni?
	(Warning)	(When you carry a lot of money, what are you careful of?)
11	**Ukuvumelana**	Uyavumelana nam ukuba esi sikolo sinabafundi abambalwa?
	(Agreement)	(Do you agree with me that this school has few pupils?)
12	**Ukwanela**	Wanela yintoni ngexesha leKrismesi?
	(Satisfaction)	(What do you like most about Christmas?)

SECTION C SERIES B (Notions)
AFDELING C REEKS B (Begrippe)

Instruction to the pupil

I am going to ask you a few questions and each time you must answer me in Xhosa. Each question will be read twice and you must respond immediately after the second time.

For example, I may ask: "Nizifunda nini izifundo zesiNgesi?" (When do you study English?)

Your answer might be "Yonke imihla."

I will read each question twice and you must respond immediately.

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek gaan vir jou 'n paar vrae vra waarop jy in Xhosa moet antwoord. Elke vraag sal twee maal gelees word. Nadat ek dit vir die tweede maal gelees het, moet jy so spoedig moontlik reageer.

Gestel ek vra: "Nizifunda nini izifundo zesiNgesi?" dan kan jy "Yonke imihla" antwoord.

Ek sal elke vraag twee maal lees en jy moet onmiddellik daarna antwoord.

I shall start now/Ek begin nou

1	**Ubude bexesha**	Uya iintsuku ezingaphi esikolweni ngeveki?
	(Length of time)	(How many days a week do you go to school?)
2	**Ukuphindaphinda**	Wakha waya eRhawutini?
	(Frequency)	(Have you been to Johannesburg?)
3	**Ubuninzi**	Maninzi kakhulu amaNdiya eFreyistata?
	(Quantity)	Are there many Indians in the Free State?)
4	**Ukucinga**	Ucinga ukuba sesiphi esona sifundo sibalulekileyo esikolweni?
	(Reflection)	(Which do you think is the most important subject at school?)
5	**Isantya**	Iimoto zimele ukuhamba ngesiphi isantya phakathi edolophini?
	(Speed)	(At what speed are cars supposed to travel in town?)
6	**Ukwahlula**	Iintyatyambo zasehlotyeni ziyafana nezasebusika?
	(Contrast)	(Are summer flowers the same as winter flowers?)
7	**Ubuninzi**	Ifunyanwa phi igolide eninzi eMzantsi Afrika?
	(Quantity)	(Where is most gold found in South Africa?)
8	**Ukuphindaphinda**	Xa udibana nomhlobo wakho nisoloko nincokola ngezifundo?
	(Frequency)	(When you meet your friend, do you always talk about school subjects?)
9	**Ubude bexesha**	Kwenzeka ntoni wakufika emva kwexesha eklasini?
	(Length of time)	(What happens when you arrive late for class?)

10	**Okwexeshana**	Umfundi ofuna ukuba ngugqirha, ufunda ixesha elingakanani eyunivesithi?
	(Temporary)	(How long does a student who wants to become a doctor study?)
11	**Inguqulelo**	Iindaba ze T.V. ziguqulwa ngubani?
	(Change)	(Who translates TV news?)
12	**Ubuninzi**	Bonke abafundi kwesi sikolo bafunda isiXhosa?
	(Quantity)	(Do all the pupils in this school learn Xhosa?)

SECTION D
AFDELING D

Instruction to the pupil

I shall give you three topics. You must choose one to discuss. These are the topics:

Opdrag aan die leerling

Ek sal drie onderwerpe noem. Jy moet een daaruit kies om te bespreek. Hier is die onderwerpe:

1	**Imidlalo**	Khetha imidlalo oyithanda kakhulu, undichazele ngayo.
	(Sport)	(Choose sports which you like best, and tell me about them.)
2	**UmZantsi-Afrika**	Wena uncokola nabantu baseMelika. Khawubaxelele ngomZantsi-Afrika.
	(South Africa)	(You are talking to people from/of America. Tell them about South Africa.)
3	**Amaphepha-ndaba**	Ucinga ukuba kubalulekile ukufunda amaphepha-ndaba? Kutheni?
	(Newspapers)	(Do you think it is important to read newspapers? Why?)

APPENDIX 2

XHOSA ORAL PROFICIENCY: SCORE SHEET NAME _____

CRD	SCHOOL		PUPIL	
1				

1 5

TEST DATE												
day		month		year		SCHOOL		AREA	SEX	H L		

6 16

LATEST XHOSA TEST																
day		month		year		ORAL %			day		month		year		WRITTEN %		

17 34

LATEST ENGLISH TEST																
day		month		year		ORAL %			day		month		year		WRITTEN %		

35 52

LATEST AFRIKAANS TEST																
day		month		year		ORAL %			day		month		year		WRITTEN %		

53 70

CRD	SCHOOL		PUPIL	
2				

1 5

LATEST OTHER TEST																	
day		month		year		ORAL %			day		month		year		WRITTEN %		

6 23

1 SECTION B: LISTENING

TEST ITEMS												TOTAL GAINED		PERCENTAGE		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					

24 40

2 SECTION C

2.1 SERIES A: FUNTIONS

TEST ITEMS												TOTAL GAINED		PERCENTAGE		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					

41 57

2.2 SERIES B: NOTIONS

TEST ITEMS												TOTAL GAINED		PERCENTAGE		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					

58 74

CRD	SCHOOL		PUPIL	
3				

1 5

3 **SECTION D:** FREE CONVERSATION

FLUENCY	GRAMMAR	VOCABU	EFF TO COM	TOTAL G		PERCENTAGE		

6 14

RAW SCORE		PERCENTAGE		

15 19

20 35

36 51